

Of Average Insanity

by Cottonmouth25

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Summary: Hiccup undergoes something he really does not want to do, and this prompts him to get his cousin back for the suggestion. Thus, a dare war starts on Berk, and threatens to throw the entire island into turmoil - all because of a few teenagers. Inspired by AnimationNut's fanfic, and includes my OCs as well! Dare suggestions wanted! WARNING: Spoilers for "Legends are Born" inside.

## 1. Sparking a War

**\*\*Greetings, and many great hellos!\*\***

**\*\*Yep, it's another awesome story by good ol' Cottonmouth25. This time, it's a HTTYD dare war between everyone's favorite gang. I wanted to do this in order to make up for "Legends are Born", which I've mostly lost interest in writing.\*\***

**\*\*Before I start, I have several things to go over as per usualâ€¦\*\***

**\*\*One, this fanfic was inspired by AnimationNut's "Of Teens and Dares", so thank you for inspiring me!\*\***

**\*\*Two, this fanfic is based directly off of "Legends are Born" and indeed stars every one of the characters. That means we get to see more of Snaketail and her hopeless crush on Tuffnut, and everyone's favorite shapeshifting dragon Batwings.\*\***

**\*\*Three, I do not own HTTYD, although I often dream of what would happen if I didâ€¦\*\***

**\*\*Let's start the craziness, shall we?\*\***

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**\*\*Arena\*\***

Like most, this war started small.

It was another average day at the Berk Dragon Academy. Hiccup's lesson was about calculating wind speed and turbulence as you flew, which would help you determine how to best fly in violently shifting winds.

However, not everyone was paying attention. The Thorston twins, Ruffnut and Tuffnut, were fighting again, Snotlout Jorgenson was snoring loudly, and Snaketail Grunderson was laying on her back and tracing imaginary designs in the air.

"Come on, guys, can we pay attention for at least five minutes?" Hiccup demanded for the sixth time in a row. "I don't know," muttered Tuffnut. "Is five minutes more or less than ten?"

Astrid Hofferson punched him on the arm. "Hiccup's trying to teach," she said. "Can't you just listen for once? This is important." Hiccup smiled at her support and turned to Fishlegs. The Ingerman boy was rapidly writing down everything Hiccup had previously said, or at least Hiccup thought he was. Fishlegs' handwriting was notoriously messy.

Astrid's ten-year old sister, Arachne Hofferson, was yawning and slumping against Rilebolt "the Skrill's scales were causing her hair to stand up with static electricity. The other dragons were scattered around the arena, all napping peacefully. Batwings and Heather were amongst them, coiled up around each other and dead to the world.

"Isn't there anything else to do today?" Snaketail groaned, sitting up and rubbing her back. "Even the twins' yak-tipping game sounds fun right now." Hiccup sighed and closed his book.

"Gobber has a lot of dragon teeth to clean today, from what I heard," he suggested, and several of the teens recoiled. "Ugh, why'd I want to go sticking my hands in some dragon's mouth?" Snotlout gagged. "Why \_wouldn't\_ you?" retorted Tuffnut. "It sounds awesome!"

Hiccup got in between the two before they could end up in a fight. "Gobber's job isn't that bad," he defended his mentor loyally. "It's important, and anyway, he enjoys doing it."

Snaketail shrugged. "To each his own," she said simply. Ruffnut squinted at Hiccup and asked, "So you're saying that you'd rather be helping Gobber clean out dragons' mouths than standing around here?" The lanky boy shrugged and said, "I guess. Anything's better than standing around in boredom."

Snotlout had a smug look on his face. "I dare you to do it," he challenged. "I dare you to go to Gobber's shop and clean out the mouth of one dragon."

Now everyone, even Batwings and Heather (who had woken up to see what the commotion was about), was staring at the cousins.

Hiccup shrugged again and said, "Why not? I mean, you could have dared me to do worse, after all. And I personally think it would be fun working with Gobber again."

Astrid looked amused. "This'll be good," she said. "I never thought I'd see the day when Hiccup would get sucked into taking a dare from Snotlout." Batwings shape-shifted into his human-dragon form and stretched his wings tiredly. "Like he said, it could be worse," he yawned.

Hiccup nodded, and then there was a sudden voice that rang out into the arena. "Oi, Hiccup!" It was Gobber the Belch. "I need ya in the forge today, I've got meself busy with all them dragons linin' up ta get their teeth cleaned."

The Jorgenson boy was looking at Hiccup expectantly. "Hey Gobber," Hiccup said, stepping forward. "How about if I help you with your dragon duties? The work will go faster, and then you can get back to the forge that much more quickly."

Gobber chuckled. "That's nice of ya, Hiccup," he admitted. "But I'm afraid I'm gonna hafta say no ta this one. Cleanin' the teeth of fire-breathin' reptiles is more dangerous than it looks."

But Hiccup was stubborn. He was like his father, Stoick the Vast, in that aspect. "Just one dragon then," he bargained. "One dragon, and then I'll go to work in the forge like you asked."

Gobber scratched his chin with his tongs. "Well, if it's one dragon, I don' see why not. Yeh'll get some more experience with the beasts, at least. Come on then, I've got a bit ova lineup today."

Hiccup followed him out, determinedly ignoring the other teens' smirks. "Three chicken eggs saying he gets burned," Tuff wagered. "Five eggs saying he gets his hand taken off," Ruff shot back. "\_Ten\_ eggs saying he gets \_killed\_!" Snotlout whooped, and the twins snickered.

Astrid slugged them all in their shoulders. "Grow up, you three," she scolded. "He'll be fine. If it has something to do with dragons, Hiccup will come out on top."

Arachne looked worried nonetheless.

Fishlegs looked like he was going to wet himself, so bad were his nerves.

Batwings just yawned, shapeshifted, and coiled up again, asleep in seconds.

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**\*\*Gobber's Forge\*\***

Hiccup never would have agreed to this dare if he had known who the first dragon in line was.

Gobber led him past the long line of patiently waiting dragons and into his shop. It looked just like any other building on Berk, except for the huge sign dangling over the entrance, which resembled a dragon's tooth. Appropriate, considering Gobber's new occupation as Berk's only dragon dentist.

But whatever confidence Hiccup had â€" indeed, he felt ready to scrub clean a Nadder's teeth or pull out a rotten fang from a Grapple Grounder's mouth â€" drained out of him the instant the first dragon stuck her head in the shop window.

Nightshade.

Batwings' Whispering Death.

"Oh come on," Hiccup groaned. "Out of all the dragons on the island, you have to pick the only one that'll grind my hand into bacon bits."

Gobber the Belch only chuckled. "Come on now, Hiccup, she ain't tha' bad. As long as yer careful, yeh'll come out relatively unscathed," he assured him. Hiccup only rolled his eyes and muttered, "Thank you for summing that upâ€|"

The burly blacksmith limped over to stand beside Hiccup at the window. Nightshade looked at the two of them expectantly, a bit of pain in those sightless eyes of hers. "What are we supposed to do?" Hiccup asked.

"I have no idea," Gobber admitted. "We've gotta take a closer look first." With that, he used his hook to pry Nightshade's mouth open. Taking a look at the Death's multiple rows of constantly rattling, rotating fangs made Hiccup feel faint.

The smell of her breath wasn't helping.

Just then, Nightshade's teeth slowly stopped rotating, settling into place with a final \*click\*. This allowed Gobber and Hiccup to see what they had to do â€" there was a single, rotting fang at the very back of her mouth. It made Hiccup's jaw hurt just looking at it.

"Aye, tha's a nasty one," Gobber said, peering into the Whispering Death's monstrous maw. As he stuck his head in, his words echoed. "Alrigh', Hiccup. Help me out here and grab hold of it."

Hiccup blanched. "Um, w-with myâ€| my hands? Don't you, um, think there's aâ€| a sort of, safer way to do this?" Gobber placed his hand down on the window's edge to steady himself as he laughed. "Safety's overrated," he said after catching his breath.

"I was afraid you were going to say that," Hiccup sighed, and after screwing up his courage, he held his breath and plunged into Nightshade's mouth.

Instantly, he recoiled as saliva dripped from the Death's upper fangs and into his hair. But Hiccup firmed his jaw and stuck his head and torso deeper in. Next to him, Gobber reached with his hand and clamped his meaty fingers around the bad tooth. After a second, Hiccup did too.

"Yeh ready?" Gobber asked, and Hiccup nodded. The sooner this was done, the better.

"Pull!" the blacksmith yelled as he yanked upwards, and Hiccup did as well with all his strength. However, even as they did so, Nightshade

flinched in pain and instinctively began rotating her fangs again. The two Vikings were positioned so that they wouldn't be hurt, but it was unnerving and very dizzying to watch up close.

Time and again, when the pain went away and Nightshade calmed down, Hiccup and Gobber would grab the rotten tooth and pull on it. But every single time, they slipped and the dragon's teeth would begin spinning around again. After the fifteenth time this happened, Hiccup was covered in tiny cuts and gashes from accidentally getting too close to the razor-sharp points.

But finally, Gobber and Hiccup managed to get a firm enough grip on the rotten tooth. "PULL!" Gobber yelled, and yanked with all of his might. There was a sickening \*pop\* and a spurt of blood.

Nightshade hissed quietly, and Hiccup could tell from the force of air that blasted out of her throat that she was screaming in pain. The blacksmith and his apprentice both stumbled backwards, out of her mouth the instant before her deadly jaws snapped shut.

The Whispering Death backed out of the shop with a whimpering hiss, teeth rattling loudly as she tried to dull the pain. As if nothing had happened, the next dragon, a Monstrous Nightmare, lazily stuck its muzzle in the window and waited for Gobber to start working.

Hiccup was shaking and breathing hard from the narrow brush with death. Gobber blew a satisfied breath out of his mouth and lightly patted Hiccup on the back. "Thanks for yer help, Hiccup," he said. "Maybe I'll let ya help again sometime! But righ' now, I need yeh ta get started on tha' forge work. If ya hurry, yeh'll be able ta join yer friends at the Great Hall fer dinner." He chuckled and gently pushed the skinny boy out of the shop.

Barely even noticing that he was outside, Hiccup took long, deep breaths to calm himself. He had been \_this \_close to getting bitten in half. He still had a lot of hard work to get done, and to top it all off, he was covered in saliva and blood, both his and Nightshade's.

As his fright wore away, it was replaced by anger. "Oh, Snotlout is going to pay dearly for this," Hiccup muttered to himself as he trudged in the direction of the forge.

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**\*\*OK, that's over with, and now it's time for you readers to get creative. I need dare requests!\*\***

**\*\*I'll be picking the dares I think are good enough and believable enough to be included " and please, \*\*\*\*\_please\_\*\*\*\* be original! I don't want anyone thinking I'm plagiarizing their own ideas.\*\***

**\*\*You might see a few of my own ideas as well, FYI.\*\***

**\*\*So, please drop a review and a dare suggestion, and see you soon!\*\***

**\*\*Next round: Hiccup daring Snotlout.\*\***

## 2. Give This a Try

**\*\*I know that this fanfic isn't as good as AnimationNut's, but really? No suggestions? Not a one? Come on, we're supposed to be a team, readers!\*\***

**\*\*â€| Oh, we're not? Alright, fine.\*\***

**\*\*Anyway, Hiccup's dare for Snotlout obviously comes from yours truly. I couldn't think of anything better, which is kind of why I need your help. My dares are terrible.\*\***

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The sun was starting to set over Berk when Hiccup arrived at the Great Hall for dinner. On his blacksmithing agenda had been three swords, two axes, ten bolas, and a mace. His hands ached, his backbone cracked audibly every time he moved, and he was still covered in dried blood.

Just another day in the life of Hiccup. Except this time there was someone to blame.

He opened the massive wood doors with a bang and shuffled over to the spit hanging over the central fire. Grabbing a half-cooked chicken leg or two, he meandered toward the table where all of his friends were chatting and laughing. Everyone was there â€" Snaketail, Astrid, Arachne, Fishlegs, Ruff and Tuff, Batwings, Heather, and Snotlout.

His dear, lovable cousin Snotlout.

"Odin's beard, Hiccup!" squeaked Fishlegs, the first of the group to notice the state he was in. His shout caused several of the adults to look over and stare at him in amazement. Hiccup didn't notice as he slipped into his usual spot between Astrid and the aforementioned boy.

"What the Hel did that dragon do to you?" demanded Astrid, tugging his arm closer so she could more closely look at the dry blood spotting it. She looked up at him and added, "And why didn't you wash any of it out?" Hiccup just shrugged and replied, "I didn't want to."

Tuffnut sniggered and commented, "Now you finally look like a Viking." His sister piled on after taking a breath through her nose, "And smell like one." The twins high-fived as Hiccup dug into his chicken.

He swallowed his mouthful and said, "If you must know, I didn't bother taking a bath because I wanted Snotlout to see just what consequences his dare had."

Said boy looked up at the mention of his name, rubbing his hurting nose (he had been flirting with Astrid again). "What, what did I do this time?" he asked, bewildered and annoyed.

Hiccup leaned across the table and spat, "Your dare. Cleaning a dragon's teeth. I had to help Gobber with the only dragon on the

island whose dental work would give my dad nightmares."

Everyone looked blank for a few seconds, until dawning realization began to appear on a few of their faces. Heather's eyes grew wide, and she said softly, "Don't tell me it was" â€" "Nightshade," Hiccup interrupted, shooting Snotlout a glare.

The Jorgenson boy gave a huge whoop of laughter, pounding his fists on the table as he cackled like a madman. Ruff and Tuff exchanged smirks while Batwings covered his face in his claws. "I trust you finished the job at least?" Snaketail said hopefully.

To everyone's relief, Hiccup nodded. "Yeah," he replied, "we managed to figure out what Nightshade's problem was and we solved it pretty quickly. The good thing is, I still have my arms," he added with a sarcastic edge, flexing his almost nonexistent arm muscles.

"It's not like you'd be any more useless without them," Snotlout snorted, still held in the grip of laughter. Astrid pulled her arm back, about to slug him, but Hiccup placed a restraining hand on her arm. He shook his head and gave her an \_I've-got-this\_ look.

"So what if I'm not strong?" Hiccup retorted to Snotlout. "It's not like muscle-work is the only thing a Viking's good at."

Snotlout looked at him like he was stupid, which was pretty ironic. "Uh, yes it is!" he insisted. "Of what use is a weak Viking? And that's exactly what you are, Hiccup â€" useless."

There was dead silence until Hiccup spoke up again.

"Alright, Snotlout," the Haddock boy challenged. "I'll bet I can find something you're useless at." His cousin snorted and shot back, "I'll bet you can't."

Hiccup looked extremely smug as he proclaimed, "Snotlout, as payback for what you put me through today, I dare you to repair one sword in Gobber's forge."

With a scoff, Snotlout waved the dare off. "Is that all? I could do that in my sleep," he claimed.

Batwings chuckled and plucked an eel from his plateful of fish. "Don't go biting off more than you can chew, tough guy," he advised, slurping the eel down headfirst.

Snotlout pushed his plate aside and stood up from the table. "You're on, Useless," he told Hiccup haughtily. "By the time lunch time rolls around tomorrow, I'm going to have the most perfect sword you've ever seen in my hands." He sauntered off through the immense doors and out of sight.

"I smell the most awesome dare war ever," Astrid said, cracking her knuckles in anticipation. Hiccup looked at her bemusedly, and she grinned knowingly at him. He grinned back after a second, looking forward to this as much as she was, despite himself.

Batwings and Heather both looked reluctant. Arachne and Fishlegs had frightened expressions on their faces. Ruff and Snaketail were smirking so widely that it looked like their heads would split in

two. And Tuff simply looked confused.

"Do we really have to escalate this into a war?" Fishlegs asked timidly. "Isn't Hiccup getting revenge on his cousin bad enough?"

Ruffnut shook her head, causing her long hair to shake wildly. "Nuh-uh, no way," she grinned. "We are going to escalate this so much, it'll be \_insane\_."

Batwings leaned back in his seat after swallowing a cod. "I have to admit, it'll be fun watching you making fools of yourselves," he smirked, but Astrid instantly shook her head. "No way, you're in this too," she said, jabbing a finger at him.

"What?" Heather asked, giving Batwings a nervous glance. He shivered and draped an arm over her shoulders. "I guess we've got no other choice but to go with it," he sighed, shaking his head.

"This is gonna be so awesome," Ruff smirked. "I'm gonna use you Sirens for some really extreme dares." She cackled at some destructive mental imagery. Hiccup took another bite of chicken and imagined Mildew's house burning with invincible fires. \_This is going to come back and bite me in the butt,\_ he thought with a shudder.

Tuff still looked confused. "Are we going to be tested on this? Because I am really not getting it," he stated bluntly. His twin sister punched him hard in the shoulder. "What's not to get?" she asked incredulously. "It's a dare war, butt-elf."

A look of anger replaced the one of bewilderment as Tuff, at least, got the insult. "Who are you calling 'butt-elf', you troll?" he growled, shoving her back. They began to brawl right there in their seats, with the fight quickly getting more and more out of hand.

"Uh, anyone want my fish?" asked Batwings, shoving the plate across the table. "I'm really not that hungry anymore!" With a cautious glance at the wrestling Thorstons, he flapped his wings and flew out of the Great Hall. Heather flapped after him, and Fishlegs scurried frantically after the two of them.

Astrid grinned as she grabbed a fish from Batwings' plate. "So, Hiccup, you ready for what's coming?" she asked, slugging him in the shoulder playfully.

"I don't know," he replied nonchalantly. "We've endured hurricanes, tidal waves, Outcast attacks! but Loki himself will never see this premature Ragnarok coming."

His girlfriend's only reply was a swift kiss on his cheek. She stood up and led her little sister out of the Great Hall.

Meanwhile, Ruff and Tuff were rolling around on the floor, shouting words that made the adult onlookers wince. In the audience, their father shook his head, making a mental note to teach them about language.

Snaketail smirked and patted Hiccup's shoulder. "I'm off to bed," she



said cheerfully. "Oh, and Hiccup â€" if there really is going to be a dare war, I think you'll need to come up with some rules in order to keep everyone in line."

The boy nodded. He turned back to his chicken as Snaketail walked out of the hall as well. "Keeping everyone in line?" he muttered to himself. "Yeah, that's probably going to be hardâ€|"

Still, Hiccup then decided to do what he did best â€" think.

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**\*\*The Next Day\*\***

Snotlout was just about to start his newest challenge. He had just finished his two-hour-long morning workout and was feeling pumped. As Gobber walked in, he smiled confidently to himself. \_This is going to be a piece of cake,\_ he thought.

"Alrigh', Snotlout," Gobber began. "Yeh ready ta begin?" The large boy hopped from foot to foot, getting his blood flowing in preparation.

The blacksmith held up a sword that had been twisted badly out of shape. "Now, the first thing ya need in weapon repair is a broken weapon!" he explained. "The second thing are yer blacksmithing tools" â€" he gestured around at the forge's interior â€" "and the third thing is love! Ya hafta genuinely feel love fer the weapons as ya slowly bring back the life force that infuses 'em."

Snotlout raised an eyebrow, even as something inside of him began to shrivel up and die.

Gobber kept explaining. "Take Prudence here fer example," he said, holding up the sword. "Hold yer ear up ta her badly twisted blade and hear her poor heart beatin' as she silently begs fer the perfect blacksmith ta make her whole again." He began to stroke the weapon and murmur soothingly to it, bringing it up to his head and nuzzling it lovingly.

Poor Snotlout began to visibly deflate. There was no way he could best Hiccup at weapon repair when he didn't even know what Gobber was talking about.

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**\*\*Snotlout's pride just got himself into another difficult position. Score one for Hiccupâ€|\*\***

**\*\*Anyway, next chapter we will get into the rules of the Berk Dare War, as well as Snotlout's choice of a dare for some unsuspecting victim(s). So give me a review and maybe a good dare suggestion, since I have no idea what to do next, and I will see you again soon.\*\***

**\*\*Next time: Snotlout dares Tuffnut\*\***

**\*\*The credit for this chapter goes to one of my most loyal readers, Megadracosaurus. You, my friend, are amazing.\*\***

**\*\*SmokeyStorm: Wow, learn something new every day! I like to use both words, but thanks for correcting me.\*\***

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**\*\* Berk Village\*\***

A black streak shot through the blue afternoon sky accompanied by an echoing screech that pierced the air. The Vikings below instinctively cried, "Night Fury! Get down!" and hit the earth. But this was only habitual behavior. After three hundred years of being plagued with dragon attacks, it would likely take hundreds more until the screech of a Night Fury was a welcome sound.

Of course, the Night Fury in question was Toothless, and aboard his back was Hiccup. The black dragon slowed down his flight just enough to come in for an elegant landing, and touched down on the ground with only the slightest of thuds. Hiccup unhooked his prosthetic from the stirrup and jumped off of Toothless' back.

"Alright, bud, that was some good flying today," Hiccup commented, and Toothless just gurgled happily in response. Hiccup smiled and checked the position of the sun.

"Looks like it's around lunchtime, bud," he noted. "You want to head to the Great Hall with me? It is Thursday, after all." Eagerly, Toothless warbled and licked his best friend's face with huge enthusiasm. Hiccup made a disgusted sound and then laughed, gesturing for Toothless to walk with him to the Great Hall.

Ever since the defeat of the Red Death and the inclusion of dragons in Viking society, that day had been named a holiday â€" Thor's Day Thursday. And it was only proper that in honor of that holiday, Vikings and dragons ate together in the Great Hall every Thursday. Of course, the only dragons that ate there every day were the two Sirens, being more civilized than their brethren.

Completing the long walk up the stairs, Hiccup pushed the door open and allowed Toothless to pass him. Inside were an amalgamation of both humans and dragons, and the air was filled with delighted conversation and a variety of squawks, growls, and chirps as the dragons socialized.

Hiccup located his friends at their usual table, surrounded by their dragons â€" there was Hookfang, Meatlug, Stormfly, Rilebolt, Barf and Belch, Horrorcow, and Nightshade. Stoick's dragon, Thornado, was nearby, as was Gobber's Boneknapper, who didn't have a name yet. Heather hadn't yet found a dragon to bond with, but she had a mutual friendship with Arachne's Skrill.

The gang was clustered around the table when Hiccup and Toothless arrived, examining something. "What's happening, everyone?" he asked, sitting down next to Astrid and Fishlegs.

Wordlessly, Snotlout sighed heavily and pushed something across the table towards Hiccup. It was what Hiccup recognized as the handle of

a sword, but there was no blade. Instead, a jagged metallic stump poked out from the ornate steel. Just then, Hiccup remembered his dare for Snotlout – repairing a weapon in Gobber's forge.

"Please don't tell me that this used to be what I think it used to be," Hiccup said, recognizing the handle. He held it up to the light of the candles dangling overhead, remembering that the sword he had made for Gobber on his birthday had such a handle.

"Poor Prudence," Batwings sighed dramatically. "All your hard work, all Gobber's devotion to her – all ruined. Snotlout has to do all of Gobber's laundry for a week to make up for what he did."

The Jorgenson boy winced. "OK, OK, no need to rub it in," he said. "So I can't do sword repair. Big deal. At least I still have my looks," he added more cheerfully, pulling out his favorite hand mirror and admiring himself in it.

"You're lucky you don't have to keep replacing that glass," Astrid muttered, earning a snort from Snaketail and a giggling fit from Arachne. Hiccup chuckled and popped a fried potato in his mouth.

"Alright," he said when he had finished chewing. "If this is going to escalate into an island-shaking dare war, then there needs to be some rules. And I have them figured out. First, no dare-backs, which means you need to wait until your next turn to get someone back."

Snotlout slammed his fist on the table and scowled at Hiccup. "You just made that up so I wouldn't get you back for this!" he protested, holding up Prudence's handle. Hiccup only shrugged and took a sip of his yak milk.

"Now, second rule," he continued in a slower voice so that everyone would hear. "Everyone has three chances to either fail a dare or skip out on it. You lose your three chances and mess up one more time after that, you lose the war and you miss out on the rest of it."

Fishlegs nodded his head frantically. "Now that definitely sounds like a good rule," he said quickly, but Ruffnut caught him in her glare. "You are not going to deliberately lose," she said threateningly, and he squeaked and nodded understandingly.

"So, Snotlout," Astrid said with a smirk. "Who's your victim?" The boy looked around the table, meeting everyone's gaze. Astrid, Ruff, Tuff, Snaketail, and Hiccup glared confidently back. Arachne squeaked when his eyes fell on her, and sighed with relief when he moved on. Fishlegs was muttering, "Please not me," over and over again. Batwings and Heather just grinned at Snotlout and flashed their fangs.

Finally, Snotlout made his decision. "I pick Tuffnut," he said, pointing directly at said boy. He sighed and shrugged. "Whatever," he replied. "What's my dare?"

It appeared it hadn't occurred to Snotlout that he'd have to think of something for Tuffnut to do. He took a very long time to choose, looking all over the Great Hall for some kind of inspiration. Hookfang watched him in amusement for a few seconds before going back

to his fish.

Clearly, the concept of thinking was still kind of new to Snotlout.

A sudden commotion at the other end of the hall sparked his interest. Mildew had just had his mead knocked over by an idle lash of a Zippleback's tail, and he started shouting things like, "Blasted dragon!" and "These beasts need to go, Stoick!"

"Why doesn't Mildew just eat at his isolated little den?" Snaketail asked with distaste. "Everyone would be much happier." It was this little comment that gave Snotlout the idea he needed.

"I've got it!" he crowed triumphantly, and pointed a dramatic finger at Tuffnut. "I dare you to sneak into Mildew's house and spend the night there without being found out!"

There was instant laughter from Astrid, Ruffnut, Hiccup, and Batwings. Fishlegs looked appalled while Heather looked mildly amused. Tuff was dumbfounded.

Astrid's cackles finally got a reaction from him. "It's not funny!" he said in protest. "Oh, yes it is," Batwings wheezed. "I haven't laughed that hard since the time Ruff rolled you out of bed and over the cliff!"

Now Ruffnut was laughing even harder. "Oh Thor, that was hilarious!" she gasped, trying to get a little air before she collapsed into giggles again. "You didn't wake up until you were halfway down!"

Fishlegs was bouncing up and down with nervousness. "Uh, guys, don't you know what consequences this could have?" he asked in a quavering voice. "If Mildew finds out that Tuffnut willingly trespassed on his property without his knowledge—"

Snotlout waved him off. "Oh, Tuff can handle it," he said dismissively. "That's why he's more fun than Useless as my punching bag." He patted a still-numb Tuff on the arm affectionately.

At last Tuffnut sighed resignedly and took his frustration out on his chicken. "Fine, whatever," he mumbled. "What time should I be there?"

"How does nine o'clock sound?" Batwings suggested breathlessly, trying to recover from the aftereffects of his laugh attack. Indeed, he still emitted short little chuckles in between breaths. He continued, "That way you can find a hiding spot and get comfortable before Mildew shows up."

Overhearing this, Nightshade, indeed the dragon famous all over Berk as the third resident of Mildew's house (unknown to said man, of course), slithered over and hissed encouragingly to Tuff.

Heather smiled and translated, "Nightshade says that if she can do it, then so can you." She giggled a little bit, unable to help herself at the thought of both Tuff and Nightshade sharing Mildew's residence without him knowing. The female Siren then swiped a mackerel from Batwings' plate, and pouted when he indignantly stole

it back. Poor Batwings gave in and let her take it, earning himself a kiss on the cheek from her as thanks.

Lunch continued as normal, with the teenagers laughing and pushing each other around playfully. The only abnormal thing was Tuffnut's glumness â€" he didn't even respond when his sister shoved him out of his seat and called him a "son of a half-troll, rat-eating munge-bucket" for the heck of it. He just gritted his teeth and sat back down.

Knowing you'd be sharing a room with the grumpiest, ugliest man on the island has a way of sucking all the motivation from you.

-.-.-.-.-

#### **\*\*Mildew's House\*\***

Tuffnut, although initially all for the dare war, began to question its merits as he began his infiltration of Mildew's house at nine o'clock. The old man was currently down in the village, complaining about some pothole in the plaza that had caused him to drop his cabbages as he wheeled them into the village. But Tuffnut didn't take any chances as he climbed up the side of the house as silently as he was able.

Thanks to Snotlout and Hookfang, Mildew's roof featured a gaping hole smack-dab in the middle, which had gone unrepaired after the hectic events that had followed. Eventually, it had been mostly forgotten, but they'd definitely be hearing Mildew's complaints the next time it rained. Tuffnut chuckled to himself at the thought as he let down a rope and climbed inside.

The Thorston male let himself take a few moments to examine the inside of Mildew's house. Only Hiccup and Astrid had ever been in here, barring a few of the adults of course. It was a sparsely furnished, with a closet, table, bed, and a few decorations here and there. Mildew's pet sheep, Fungus, was chewing on the leg of the table and bleating to himself.

"Glad I missed that," Tuff muttered as he observed a painting on the wall, which depicted a younger Mildew slaying what looked like a Blundertail. Those scorpion-like monsters were the third-fiercest dragons known, rivaled only by the Night Fury and the Siren.

Tuffnut realized that he had to move or else get caught by Mildew. He began to look around for a good hiding place â€" he checked the closet and inside Mildew's cauldron, but rejected both. The closet didn't have enough room to lie down in, and whatever was in the cauldron smelled bad enough to make a Berk Bog-Rose vomit. All the while, Fungus watched him with a kind of bored curiosity.

Suddenly, a hiss and a slithering sound reached his ears. Tuff looked up to see Nightshade entering through the hole on the roof. "Oh, hey Nightshade," he greeted her bluntly. "I should probably get rid of that rope, huh?" He tugged on the rope, and it came falling down after a hard enough pull.

"What are you doing here?" Tuff asked, turning back to the Whispering Death. She hissed in response and pointed with her tail to Mildew's

bed. A realization hit him just then. "Oh, your hole's under there?" he said, and she nodded.

Mildew's bed took the shape of a large slab of rock, which looked very heavy and immovable. However, when Nightshade pushed against it, it slid out of the way relatively easily, revealing a huge hole underneath it. She made sure that the bed partially covered the hole for some reason.

"That is so cool," Tuff smirked. "To think that Mildew doesn't even know you sleep down thereâ€¦" His voice trailed off as another realization hit him, harder this time. It was accompanied by a rare occurrence â€" a good idea.

"Hey, you think I can join you for the night in there?" the boy asked. Nightshade grinned and rattled her teeth. He took this for a yes and crawled in, then shouted in surprise as he fell about ten feet to the bottom.

Nightshade's cavern, illuminated by the half-oval of light provided by the opening above him, looked surprisingly comfortable. Dirt and dried grasses covered the stony floor, and there was a little fire pit in the center. It looked almost like a person had made it.

The Whispering Death herself slithered in just then and reached up with her jaws toward the bed. Now that Tuff got a good look at the big slab's bottom, he could see a series of deep puncture marks in the stone. He watched Nightshade slide her long front fangs into the holes and subsequently pull the bed back over the den's entrance.

"Wow, that's impressive," Tuffnut commented. "Uh, it's also really dark in here." Indeed, without any light, it was now pitch-black. But Nightshade soon fixed that â€" a blast of whirlwind-like flames into the fire pit gave a dim illumination to the cave.

Tuffnut settled down on the soft dirt as Nightshade coiled up beside him and closed her milky eyes. He grinned to himself â€" what had seemed like the worst dare ever had turned into the most awesome camping trip ever.

\_I should convince Nightshade to let me move in here permanently,\_ the Thorston boy thought with a snicker as, above them, the sounds of the unsuspecting Mildew opening the door and going about his business reached his ears.

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**\*\*Now all you "Legends are Born" readers finally get a glimpse of Nightshade's den! Maybe when Mildew's on his deathbed, she'll burrow up from underneath him and reveal to him the truthâ€¦ He'll die knowing that he's let a dragon sleep underneath him for all this time.\*\***

**\*\*Anyway, thanks for all the suggestions, guys, I'm definitely taking them into consideration for future chapters.\*\***

**\*\*Leave a review and a dare suggestion if you please, and see you soon!\*\***

**\*\*Next chapter: Tuffnut dares Snaketail\*\***

#### 4. Put Your Left Leg Out

**\*\*This dare was suggested by an anonymous reviewer going by the name of ShadentheDragon. Thank you and kudos for the simple yet brilliant suggestion.\*\***

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*Great Hall\*\***

Vikings can be loosely described as morning people. They're the definition of early birds (although they obviously lack feathers), awake at the crack of dawn and asleep only when the moon is high in the sky. They're such hard workers, and there is always so much to do in the village, the people are always up early to get some sort of work done.

So it came as no surprise that the Great Hall was packed only ten minutes after the sun rose above the horizon. Breakfast was underway, and among the eagerly eating adults were a bunch of comparatively scrawny teenagers. The only one that wasn't there yet was Tuffnut.

"It was so weird last night," Ruffnut said with a shiver. "I never thought I'd say this, but I already miss having my brother snoring across the room from me."

Snaketail patted her on the back. "Don't worry about it," she responded encouragingly. "It was only for one night. He'll be rattling the foundations again in no time."

"What if Mildew caught him?" Fishlegs worried, shifting nervously in his seat and too tense to eat. "What if he's getting in trouble right now? What if" â€" he was interrupted by Hiccup placing a soothing hand on his rather large shoulder. "Fishlegs," he said firmly. "He'll be fine. It's Tuffnut, remember?"

They waited a while, occasionally stealing glances at the great wooden doors to see if Tuffnut would enter. But he didn't, not until most of the adults had already left. Everyone was beginning to get worried when the blond boy burst in with a bang.

"What's up, guys?" he asked, sounding bored and indifferent as he usually did. A few people were awed by his usual lack of emotion. Was he affected at all by his precarious previous nights' sleep?

"So, how'd it go at Mildew's?" Heather asked. She was curious and just a little suspicious that he was acting as if nothing had happened. "Did you get caught? Were you bothered at all by the fact that Mildew could have caught you?"

Tuff only grinned and picked up a plate of bacon and eggs. "Are you kidding?" he sneered. "Nightshade let me bunk with her for the night. It was the most awesome night ever!" He pumped his fist in the air and then shoved an egg into his mouth.

"I should have known something like that would happen," Batwings

shrugged. "Nightshade's always helping out. I wouldn't be surprised if she asks Tuff to live with her from now on."

At this remark, the Thorston boy grinned again and replied, "Yeah, sleeping in her cave was the best thing that ever happened to me. I was kind of hoping she'd take me in again tonight!" He trailed off, slipping away into some wistful fantasy.

Suddenly, Astrid caught Ruffnut staring desperately at her. Nodding, she said to Tuff, "I don't know. Ruff was just telling us how much she missed you last night."

"I was not," Ruff immediately denied. But aside from playfully shoving her brother's face into his food, she didn't do anything else besides smile gratefully at her best friend.

"Wow, Tuff," Snotlout remarked with a smirk. "You're the first guy out of any of us that's slept with a girl." Tuff's eyes grew wide as he registered this remark. "Yeah, I'm the Viking!" he cheered, reaching across the table to high-five Snotlout.

"Speak for yourselves," Batwings said with a sly grin. Heather added snidely, "Too bad a dragon's the only chance he's ever going to get," This comment prompted laughs all around, especially from Ruffnut.

But Tuffnut was far from put off by the insult "it was too sophisticated for him." "You really think so?" he asked the Siren flirtatiously, giving her what he thought was a suggestive look.

Unfortunately for him, Batwings saw immediately what he was doing "after all, Heather still had to put up with Tuffnut and Snotlout despite the fact that she was a dragon" and he went into protective mode, flaring his wings and flashing his fangs, with small licks of flame curling from his mouth. Tuff immediately shrank back from the annoyed Siren, while Heather gave Batwings a grateful smile and twined her arm around his.

Hiccup suddenly got up from the table and stretched his arms with a loud yawn, as he was still a little sleepy this early in the morning, which helped to dispel the tension. "Well, I'm off," he said cheerfully. "I want to squeeze in a little morning flight with Toothless before Gobber sets me to work knitting him replacements for all his skivvies that Snotlout ruined." Said boy blushed and shoved a potato into his mouth to stop his snappy retort "he wasn't used to the concept of doing laundry either."

"How do you ruin laundry?" Arachne asked with genuine curiosity, cutting up her egg into bits before popping them one by one into her mouth. "You do not want to know," her older sister cautioned with a shudder.

Flinging his legs over the bench, Hiccup walked away, hesitantly placing a farewell kiss on Astrid's cheek before he left (he still wasn't bold enough to do it without the hesitation). As he strode toward the huge doors leading outside, his metallic prosthetic squeaked on every other step.

"Best idea ever!" Tuffnut suddenly cried as Hiccup disappeared. "Oh



noâ€| " Fishlegs muttered miserably. Ruffnut snickered, practically reading her twin's mind â€" she knew a good idea of Tuff's when she saw it.

The long-haired boy leaned across the table to Snaketail. "I've got a dare for you," he crowed triumphantly, very pleased with himself for coming up with it. The girl sighed resignedly and looked at him, waiting to be hit with her unpleasant task.

"Your dare isâ€| " Tuff said, pausing dramatically before continuing, "â€| to steal Hiccup's leg."

Everyone exchanged glances before they reacted. Fishlegs didn't look panicky for once, Arachne and Ruffnut were grinning, and everyone else looked somewhat amused. "That's a surprisingly good one," Batwings said with a smile.

"Told you it was the best idea ever," Tuff said with a smirk, leaning back in his seat proudly. "Oh, and Snakyâ€| you have to do it while he's wearing it."

The girl snorted and rolled her eyes. "Please," she said dismissively. "I like challenges." When her gaze fell back on Tuffnut, the words "\_that's why I like you\_" were written all over it.

"Well?" Astrid said after a moment, gesturing at the door with a mischievous grin. Snaketail glanced at her, then the door, then back at her. "What, now?!" she protested.

"Yes, now," Snotlout goaded her. "The sooner the better, right? Unless you're too \_afraid\_ of Hiccup the \_Useless\_," he added teasingly. Astrid slammed her fist down on her spoon, causing an egg to fly across the table and whack Snotlout in the face.

"Fine, I'll do it now," Snaketail said resignedly, getting up and walking out the door. There was a long period of silence after that.

"This should be good," Tuffnut finally said. Ruffnut agreed, "Looks like you've finally learned to use that brain of yours, gnome-breath." They banged heads and turned back to their meals.

"Should we be afraid of the wrath Hiccup will unleash on Snaketail when he gets his leg back?" Batwings asked unconcernedly. Snotlout snorted and said sarcastically, "Right after we fear the wrath of the ant whose anthill someone steps on."

Astrid scowled at him and folded her arms. "Come on, guys," she said firmly. "You underestimate him. One of these days, he'll end up frightening his own dad. Just you wait."

-.-.-.-.-.

**\*\*Berk Village\*\***

Hiccup was on his way back to his house to wake Toothless up â€" he'd been kind of a late sleeper recently â€" when he began to get the feeling that he was being followed. It was slight, but he felt sure

that someone was tailing him. Hiccup slowed down his walking speed, feeling slightly unnerved but trying to remain casual.

He wandered aimlessly through the village, hoping to lose his mysterious pursuer eventually. It took an hour, but Hiccup finally felt comfortable enough to breathe a sigh of relief and head once more for his house. He felt confident that his pursuer had gotten bored enough to leave him be.

The Haddock boy turned the corner around the slaughterhouse " there weren't any animals currently in there, thank goodness " and a sudden, aggressive yell split the peaceful atmosphere, coming from right next to him. There was a blur of motion, and then something slammed into Hiccup, knocking him to the ground with a startled shout.

Hiccup futilely struggled as Snaketail wrestled him down to the ground and pinned him there. And then, with a quick twist of her hands "pop!" his metallic prosthetic leg was in her hands as she sprinted away.

Dumbfounded, Hiccup simply stared after her in shock for a few seconds. Then the realization of what she had just done hit him, and he let out a long groan. \_And just when I was about to go flying with Toothless!\_ he thought, crawling over to the side of the building and using it to help him stand up shakily.

"Why me?" he muttered to himself as he began to limp along, using the building as a support. "She's going to have to give that back, sooner or later" Probably later"

Such were the troubles of a one-legged boy with such \_great\_ friends.

-.--.-.-.

\*\*I'm pretty sure Hiccup has to put up with this on a regular basis. There's no way that this is the first time his prosthetic has been stolen.\*\*

\*\*Anyways, thank all of you for the amazing dare suggestions I've been getting thus far, and you can bet I'll be using all of them, eventually.\*\*

\*\*So, drop a review and leave a dare suggestion or two, and I will see you again for the next whacky exploit!\*\*

\*\*Next chapter: Snaketail dares Fishlegs\*\*

## 5. A Doubly Unpleasant Endeavour

\*\*This dare was suggested by Transmorphic Wyvern. Thank you very much, my good sir.\*\*

\*\*I have to admit, it was difficult to choose between all the good dares for Fishlegs requested by my readers. But this one takes the cake for sure.\*\*

\*\*Don't get discouraged if I didn't pick your dare " I keep going

through past reviews to see if there are any good dares I haven't used yet.\*\*

-.--.-.-.

Finally, later that afternoon, Hiccup managed to find Snaketail and the others. He had limped all through the village searching for her, provoking stares from all of the other villagers as he determinedly forged ahead. When he set his mind to something, he wasn't going to let something as trivial as a missing leg stop him.

He entered the gateway and crossed through the threshold and into the arena, causing everyone to stop what they were doing and stare at him, including all the dragons. Hiccup was breathing hard and holding onto the wall for support, slowly hopping into the arena on his remaining foot. The sight caused everyone to burst out into laughter, while the dragons only looked confused as to what was so funny.

"I swear to Thor, that never gets old," Ruffnut cackled, clutching her stomach. Tuffnut doubled over and leaned on her shoulder while half-laughing and half-gasping. Snaketail was on her hands and knees, Arachne was struggling to maintain consciousness as her laughter made her unable to breathe, the two Sirens were fighting in vain to hold back their laughter, and Snotlout was rolling on the ground.

Astrid wheezed for breath and walked over to let Hiccup use her as a support. "Sorry about that," she said, letting out a leftover chuckle. "I mean, it is kind of funny."

Hiccup shrugged nonchalantly. "Yeah, yeah, I know," he sighed, hopping along to keep up with her. "It's always a laugh to rob the village screw-up of the only thing that manages to keep him upright." Astrid only giggled at his sarcastic banter as she led him over to where the rest of the group was still howling.

"Alright, alright, that's enough," Snaketail gasped to the others. "Some of us need to breathe."

"Well, give me back my leg then," Hiccup demanded, holding out his hand. Snaketail, who indeed had the prosthetic in her grasp, only held it to her chest protectively and replied, "Mm, I don't think so. I want to see you hop around some more."

She, along with half of the people present, smirked at the sight of Hiccup's cheeks coloring in anger. "Like that isn't old enough already," he spat. "Give it back. I mean it."

Snaketail had a playful smile on her face. "Come and get it," she sang, waving it around. Hiccup only groaned and called, "Toothless!"

Immediately, the Night Fury pounced on Snaketail, throwing her to the ground and snarling at her. Her mischievous expression was instantly replaced by one of terror. "Okay, I'll return it!" she croaked as his paw came down on her ribcage, squeezing the air from her lungs.

Hiccup let go of Astrid and hopped delicately over to where Snaketail lay under Toothless' claws. He bent down carefully and snatched up the prosthetic, then stood back up and began screwing it back on, all

while standing on one leg.

Multiple stunts like these had given Hiccup some impressive balancing skills.

When the leg was back on, Toothless took that as a cue to get off of Snaketail. She inhaled deeply before standing up, wincing as her ribs throbbed. "Ow," she muttered. "Remind me to never get on your dragon's bad side."

"You don't have to worry about him unless you steal my leg again," Hiccup replied darkly. "Or else I'll command him to dangle you from a cliff and let the albatrosses peck at you." Everyone present shivered at the mental image, and Snaketail only glared at him before retreating to Horrorcow's side.

"So, is everyone ready for another lesson?" Hiccup asked, turning to his chalkboard. "Ooh, ooh, yes!" Fishlegs said excitedly, and almost everyone groaned.

"Another day of listening to you prattle on about wind velocity and all that crap is enough to put a man to sleep," Snotlout said with a sour look on his face.

Tuffnut looked confused. "Velocity? What's velocity?" he asked. Batwings opened his mouth only after making sure he wouldn't burst into a round of impromptu chuckles before replying acidly, "The speed of a moving object â€" for example, how fast you'll go when I drop you off a mountain."

The Thorston boy brightened. "We're going to be throwing things off of mountains now?" he asked delightedly. His sister agreed, "Finally, Hiccup's lessons are getting as good as he probably isâ€"|" She leaned into him and fluttered her eyelids suggestively, before getting punched in the face by a certain Hofferson girl.

Hiccup gulped, feeling awkward as he always did when the two girls fought over him. "Ahem, could we move on to the lesson?" he hazarded, gesturing to the chalkboard.

"Not until after Snaketail gives her dare to someone," Snotlout insisted, jerking a thumb at her. She looked up from feeding her Grapple Grounder a cabbage with a look of realization in her eyes.

"Oh, that's right!" she said. "It's my turn to dare someone now, isn't it? Hmmâ€"|" she trailed off into silence as she glanced around the arena. Finally, her eyes brightened and she pointed at her target. "I'm going to go with Fishlegs!" she said decisively.

Said boy squeaked and covered his mouth in horror. Snaketail had an evil look in her eyes when she proclaimed, "Fishlegs, I dare you to help out Stoick and the other adults haul in their next catch and then eat a meal's worth of the fish for dinnerâ€"|" raw."

Snotlout whooped and punched Fishlegs on the shoulder. The Ingerman boy looked thunderstruck as he tried to get a protest out of his frozen throat. Tuffnut leaned over to his twin and whispered, "I take it back. This is the best dare ever."

"I can't do that!" Fishlegs suddenly burst out. "Hauling in the next catch requires a lot of heavy lifting, and you know I'm built more for puzzles and intellectual stuff! And everyone knows that I have a weak stomach!" He gulped and seemed to grow queasy at the simple thought of what he had to do.

"You can skip it and lose one of your three chances, or you can go ahead and do it," Snaketail said firmly, eyes glinting. She knew that although Fishlegs wasn't that competitive, he still hated it when he fell behind in a challenge, especially when the challenge was something well within his capabilities to do. And lifting baskets and eating a few raw fish was certainly simple enough for him to do (with effort), as much as he hated to admit it.

"Fine!" Fishlegs finally moaned. "I'm so going to regret this!" Hiccup walked over and patted his best (human) friend sympathetically on the shoulder.

"The boats should be coming back with the fish within the hour," Batwings helpfully observed. "Heather and I were flying over the sea not too long ago and saw them already coming in with their catch."

"They could definitely use the help," Heather added, smirking.

Fishlegs gave a small smile when Meatlug waddled over to give him a huge lick across the cheek. "Thanks Meatlug! well, I guess I'll see you guys at dinner!" Fishlegs said, trudging off in dejection.

"You think he's going to make it through all that lifting?" Astrid asked, half-amusedly and half-worriedly. "And if he does, you think he'll be able to stomach a plateful of raw fish?"

Hiccup folded his arms and stared after Fishlegs' retreating form. "He'll be fine," he insisted. "Fishlegs is tougher than he looks. Remember when Snotlout stole those Changewing eggs?"

The Jorgenson boy gave a small "Eep!" at the memory, then flushed bright red when everyone laughed.

-.--.-.-.

Fishlegs got to the docks just in time to see the trio of fishing boats returning from the open ocean. Just as Batwings had said, they looked like they had brought in a very successful haul. As thankful as Fishlegs was for that, it also meant that he had to do more work.

Even as the first of the three boats pulled into the harbor, there was a sudden roar and a shadow flashing across the ground. Fishlegs looked up quickly, just in time to see Stoick the Vast and Thornado plunging down from above to make a surprisingly gentle landing. The huge Thunderdrum opened his gaping jaws and deposited a pile of fish on the ground in front of him.

"Great work, Thornado!" Stoick laughed, patting the sea dragon on his broad head. Thornado gurgled in pleasure and licked the chief's hand as a thank-you.

Fishlegs screwed up his courage. It was now or never.

"Umm, sir?" he asked tentatively. Stoick turned around in surprise as Fishlegs took the last few steps up to the elder Haddock. "Oh hello, Fishlegs," he said. "What can I do for you this fine afternoon?"

The large boy took a moment to rearrange his words in his head before opening his mouth. "Uh, I was wondering if I could help you guys take the fish to the food storehouse?" he asked, somewhat timidly. He didn't know how Hiccup could talk to the chief like any other person, even if Stoick \_was\_ his dad.

The burly chief laughed and clapped Fishlegs on the back. "How kind of you, Fishlegs!" he guffawed. "Sure thing, we need all the help we can get! Climb aboard, take a basket, and carry it up to the storehouse, if you please." He walked off to grab three baskets of fish, then carried them uphill, whistling idly.

Fishlegs gulped as he hopped over the side of the boat and wrapped his arms around what looked like a lighter basket. Even so, he grunted as he used all of his strength to heave the basket off of the deck. Breathing hard, Fishlegs gingerly stepped off of the boat and onto the dock before turning his gaze to the food storehouse, all the way up on one of the highest points in the village.

He groaned slightly and began to take one exhausting step after another, occasionally shifting his grip on the heavy basket. \_This is going to be one long afternoon,\_ he grumbled to himself, even as the lid of the basket shifted and he suddenly got a whiff of the fish inside.

He'd have to get used to that smell, because he'd be smelling it again at dinner.

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*And thus begins the grueling trial of the overweight-but-undermusclcd Fishlegs Ingerman. I'm actually surprised Fishlegs doesn't get seasick (or airsick, for that matter) with his pathetically weak stomach.\*\***

**\*\*I think everyone except Snotlout and Astrid finds being a proper Viking tough, for the record.\*\***

**\*\*Anyhoo, make sure to drop by with a review and maybe even a new dare suggestion, and I'll see you soon!\*\***

**\*\*Next chapter: Fishlegs dares Astrid\*\***

## 6. What Goes Down Must Come Up

**\*\*This dare suggestion comes from Lighty7. This one beat the others by a \*\*\*\*\_landslide\_\*\*\*\*.\*\***

-.--.-.-.

"Come on, Fishlegs, you only have two more to go!" Snaketail laughed, unable to control herself.

Fishlegs swallowed thickly and picked up his seventh raw fish. True to Snaketail's earlier dare, Fishlegs had picked out enough raw fish for a meal after hauling up the last of the baskets to the food storehouse. And now he was choking the mackerel down, one by one.

"I'm starting to feel a little nauseous," he moaned after he chewed up and swallowed a large bite of the fish's flesh. "You have it easy," Batwings snickered, "since we dragons have to eat raw fish day in and day out." He tossed an anchovy into the air and caught it in his mouth to demonstrate, to the applause of the Thorston twins.

"You know you can cook the fish, right?" Arachne pointed out, holding up her own thoroughly charred salmon to illustrate her point.

"Ugh, cooked fish tastes tooâ€| burnt," Heather said in disgust. "My parents tried to bring me up on cooked fish, and it never ended well for them." She smirked knowingly and mimed throwing up. Batwings just chuckled and reached for another anchovy.

Everyone else was too busy being entertained by Fishlegs' dinner to eat their own. Finally, the large boy swallowed his last bite of mackerel, and everyone burst into wild applause. Ruff and Tuff both patted him on the back while Snotlout shook his hand and Astrid walloped him in the shoulder in typical Astrid fashion.

"Now you can have as many cooked fish as you want," Hiccup said with a smile, offering his plate of cod to Fishlegs. But his friend regretfully shook his head and muttered, "I'm too fullâ€|"

"Just think of it this way," Snaketail said, trying to make her voice gentle. "You'll never have to go through that again â€" unless you're stranded in the middle of the ocean without your dragon," she added thoughtfully.

Tuffnut's eyes brightened. "I have an idea for my next dare," he said to his sister, and she shoved him out of his seat.

"Now, the only question isâ€|" Snotlout said dramatically. "â€|Who's getting dared next, Fishy-boy?"

Fishlegs gulped and stared around at the expectant faces of his friends. He started to regret ever joining in on this whole "dare war" agreement. As much as he hated getting dared to do all this crazy stuff, he hated inflicting pain on his friends even more.

"Alright," he sighed, deciding to go with the person most able to take his dare â€" indeed, he had somewhat of a good, safe idea. "I'm going to go with Astrid."

The Hofferson girl folded her arms and glared challengingly across the table at him. "Alright, spit it out," she smirked, daring him to dare her, so to speak.

Taking a deep breath, Fishlegs couldn't help but smile faintly as he gave her his challenge. "Speaking of spitting things outâ€| I dare

you to drink a whole cup of your yaknog without doing that."

He got a bag of mixed reactions from that sentence. Hiccup looked horrified. Snotlout looked like he was about to be sick. Ruff and Tuff had sadistic grins slowly spreading across their faces. Fishlegs himself looked a little worried, and Arachne seemed more concerned. The two Sirens were glancing from one face to the other, completely befuddled. Snaketail remained expressionless â€" alright, a little disappointed that the large boy hadn't picked something a little harsher.

"Wait, I don't even have any yaknog left," Astrid said to him. "And I completely forgot the recipe."

Fishlegs smiled a little guiltily and replied, "Umâ€¦ well, I found the cup you gave me on Snoggletog behind my houseâ€¦" He drew out the mug and put it on the table, its disgusting contents sloshing slightly. Fishlegs continued, "I never really got around to drinking it, and, um, I stashed it in the snow to keep it fromâ€¦ you know, going badâ€¦"

"I think it's too late for thatâ€¦" Hiccup muttered, earning him a punch on the shoulder. "Yeah, that stuff was bad from the get-go," Snotlout agreed, and he ended up clutching his arm in pain as well.

Astrid eyed the cup and its contents â€" she found it to look a little more nausea-inducing than when she had actually made it. Then again, that was probably because it had been months since Snoggletog.

And if expiry dates existed, then yaknog would have one of about a minute.

"Is this stuff really as bad as you guys say?" Astrid asked cautiously, picking up the mug and staring at it distastefully. Hiccup looked reluctant before hesitantly replying, "Well, umâ€¦ no offence or anything, but yes."

He winced and flinched back in case she decided to punch him again, but she didn't. "Well at least you're being honest," the Hofferson girl said.

"Remember, you have to drink the whole cup without spitting anything out," Snotlout instantly reminded her as she raised the cup to her lips. Astrid glared at him with a look that said "\_One more word, Snotloutâ€¦\_" She raised the mug a little higher, hesitated, scrunched up her nose, closed her eyes â€" and tipped the mug so that the sludge fell into her mouth.

Instantly, her eyes bulged and her cheeks puffed out. She slammed the mug down on the table, spilling a few drops of the yaknog on the table. Everyone edged away from the drops as they landed.

Astrid slapped a hand over her mouth to stop herself from spewing the disgusting brew all over Ruffnut (who indeed sat across from her). Heather and Batwings looked completely shocked, as they had not expected such a dramatic reaction. The girl Siren looked at her boyfriend worriedly as he muttered "She'll be alright, she'll be alrightâ€¦" under his breath, holding onto her shoulders for



emotional support.

After a tantalizing three seconds, Astrid loudly gulped down the mouthful and took a few moments to recover. Her face was pale and she was shaking uncontrollably. She looked as if she had seen a ghost.

Hiccup put a reassuring hand on her shoulder, but she waved him away. She didn't need him to help her through this " she was a Viking, for Thor's sake. She could handle a little food poisoning.

Finally, after finishing her breather and summoning her determination to succeed in this dare, Astrid once again held the yaknog-filled cup to her mouth. This time, though, she chugged the rest in one go. Gasping, she slammed the cup back onto the table again and took deep, shuddering breaths.

"Now that was entertaining," Ruff snickered. Astrid would have come around the table to punish her physically in some way if she didn't feel so horrible. "Whoa, I think she's turning green!" Snotlout cried, starting to laugh.

Worried now, Hiccup faced her and indeed saw that she was a pale green color. "I need" to lie down" Astrid moaned, clutching her stomach.

Hiccup got up from the table and took her hand. She grabbed it with weak fingers and stood up shakily with him. "I'll take you home," Hiccup told her. "Your parents will know what to do."

Numbly, Astrid nodded. She followed miserably behind him, taking slow, hesitant steps. Hiccup was eternally patient with her, muttering soothing things to her just loudly enough for her to hear and holding her hand all the while. After two minutes, the two of them exited the Great Hall, leaving the other teens to contemplate on what just happened.

"I hope she's alright," Heather murmured, staring worriedly at the closing doors. Batwings released his tense grip on her shoulders and responded, "Yeah, I've never seen Astrid look so" helpless before."

Arachne pushed her plate away and said quickly, "I'm not hungry anymore." She raced out of the Great Hall after her sister.

"Ah, she'll be fine," Snotlout said unconcernedly. When everyone turned around to glare at him, he protested, "What? Astrid's tough. She'll be back to normal in no time at all."

Fishlegs had a stricken expression on his face. "Oh no, I hope she isn't really sick," he worried, breath growing faster. "What if she gets food poisoning? What if some disease has been festering in that cup for months? What if she dies? What if her spirit comes back to haunt me for the rest of my life?!"

Snaketail swatted him with her empty plate. "Get a grip!" she shouted at him. In a more gentle tone, she said, "Come on, it's just not agreeing with her. Astrid will be scowling and punching everyone in a few days at the most."

Everyone guessed in the back of their minds that the first person to get punched would be Fishlegs Ingerman. Especially if she did end up contracting some life-threatening illness.

With yaknog, you never knew.

-.-.-.-.-..

**\*\*Oh, yaknog! Someone throw that mug into the sea!\*\***

**\*\*Poor Astrid. This has to be the most fragile we've ever seen her. I'm accepting flowers and get well cards for a limited time, to be delivered to everyone's favorite bad-arse Viking warrior-in-training when I next visit her.\*\***

**\*\*â€|Yes, I indeed enjoy good relations with each of the characters. Except Snotlout. But then again, he doesn't even have a good relationship with his parents.\*\***

**\*\*Review and see you again soon!\*\***

**\*\*Next chapter: Astrid dares Heather\*\***

## 7. The Great Outdoors

**\*\*This dare came from the almighty Megadracosaurus. You, good chap, are a great help.\*\***

**\*\*Disclaimer: I ain't British.\*\***

-.-.-.-.-..

**\*\*Arena\*\***

No one in the group saw head nor foot of Astrid anywhere on Berk for three days straight. Hiccup would visit occasionally to see how she was feeling, and when he arrived at the Berk Dragon Academy for the next lesson, Fishlegs would always pounce on him and ask a flurry of questions.

"Is she OK? Is Astrid dying? Did you tell her that I'm sorry?" he fired at Hiccup on Monday afternoon the instant the Haddock boy walked in.

"Geez, Fishlegs!" Hiccup protested, waving his hands for Fishlegs to calm down. "I told you yesterday that she's recovering just fine. The yaknog just didn't agree with her, that's all."

Fishlegs breathed a huge sigh of relief. "It wasn't that bad of a dare, Fishlegs," Snaketail reassured him. "Just don't feel so guilty. Astrid knows you didn't want for that to happen."

With the Ingerman's help, Hiccup managed to get the lesson smoothly underway. After all, Fishlegs always enjoyed helping Hiccup with his lessons, and cheered up considerably. He remained cheerful all through the lesson (Calculating Physics and Aerodynamics of Dragons in Flight, his favorite!), until a certain girl walked into the arena about halfway through.

"Hey guys," Astrid grinned, which turned into a grimace as her stomach gave a painful jolt. Fishlegs stumbled up to her and sputtered an apology, but she waved him off " after giving him a hard punch in his shoulder.

"Astrid," Snotlout greeted, sidling up to her. "You still look a little pale, babe. Need me to hold your hand?"

Hiccup walked over to put an end to him, but it obviously wasn't necessary. By the time he had gotten over there, Astrid had bent Snotlout's arm behind his back, tripped him and shoved him to the ground, and used her foot to plant his face on the hard stone.

"Good to see you're back," Hiccup grinned, giving her his own light punch on her shoulder. She punched him back thrice as hard and replied, "Of course you are." She grinned and stepped off of Snotlout. "After all, who else would put this ugly troll in his place every day, hmm?"

Hiccup grinned back at her and hugged her. She pulled him into a wonderful kiss that lasted for ten seconds. Snotlout had the misfortune to stand up painfully and find their intertwined lips just a foot from his face. "Delightful," he muttered, going back to Hookfang's side to pout and shoot the couple a glare.

When Astrid had let him go, Hiccup dazedly walked back to his place beside the chalkboard and prepared to continue the lesson. Then he looked around and saw that only Fishlegs and Astrid were paying any attention.

Sighing, he closed his book. "We'll save the rest of the lesson for tomorrow," he said regretfully. Fishlegs moaned quietly, reluctantly putting his notebook and charcoal away.

"So, now what do we do?" Arachne asked, yawning and drawing Rilebolt's tail more tightly around her. "Astrid has to give a dare to someone now," Ruffnut instantly reminded them from her perch on Barf's neck. The twins had been entertaining themselves by shooting fireballs at the walls.

"Oh, that's right," Astrid said with realization, walking over to Stormfly and scratching her scales affectionately. "You'd better believe that's right," Tuff scowled at her. "It's been days! I want to see someone get humiliated!"

"I don't know if it'll be humiliating," Astrid compromised, "but I have the perfect dare for Little Miss Siren over there." She smirked and jabbed a finger at the purple-and-blue eel-like dragon curled around her boyfriend.

Heather lifted her huge head and yawned widely before shapeshifting into her humanoid form. "This wouldn't happen to be payback for kidnapping Rilebolt and stealing the Book of Dragons, would it?" she asked with a grin.

"Hey, if anyone's giving payback for that, it's my little sister," Astrid replied evenly, gesturing to the ten-year-old. "But yeah, maybe," she admitted as an afterthought.

"In that case, I probably deserve what's coming," Heather conceded

graciously. "What do I have to do?"

The Hofferson girl walked right up to the Siren and gave her challenge in a clear, carrying voice. "I dare you to spend one night in Breakneck Bog. Alone."

Instantly, Fishlegs audibly screamed. Tuff and Ruff snickered while Hiccup's eyes widened. Batwings got up and walked to Heather's side, giving her a questioning look. She only grinned confidently at him.

"Don't worry, I can handle it," she assured the male Siren. "The only thing I'll have to worry about is the Gravekeeper and Smothering Smokebreath dragons there. The Gravekeepers shouldn't bother me as long as I don't dig up their future meals, and the Smokebreaths won't pay me any heed if I come without anything metal."

"Y-You're n-not scared at a-all?" Fishlegs stammered incredulously, peeking out from behind the barrel he had hidden himself behind. Heather only shot him a confident look from her jade eyes and scoffed, "Please."

Snotlout sauntered up to her and peered at the sky. "Oh no, looks like the sun's setting already," he said with mock concern. "You know, I was thinking of camping there myself, just for a change of sceneryâ€¦ I could come with you" â€œ"

The arrogant boy didn't even finish his pickup line when Heather flared her wings and extended her fangs, giving him her most bloodthirsty grin. He took one look at the girl and squeaked in fear, deflating instantly.

Heather finished for him sweetly, "â€¦but I already ate, thanks." She flashed him another grin, one that sent him scurrying behind Hookfang, who looked back at him with an amused grunt.

"As Snotlout said, it's getting close to sunset," the girl Siren stated. "So I might as well get going. I'm actually quite looking forward to thisâ€¦" She gave Batwings a kiss in farewell before spreading her wings and flying out of the arena.

Hiccup walked up to Batwings and watched her go. "I hope Snotlout remembers that you Sirens don't eat Vikings anymore," he said with a glance at the cowering Jorgenson.

"Who says we don't?" Batwings replied with a hungry glint in his eye as he regarded Hiccup. He laughed suddenly and added, "Just kidding. Anyway, he indeed doesn't know that, and it's going to stay that way."

The scrawny boy just grinned and walked off, dismissing the class for the day.

-.-.-.-.-

**\*\*Berk Village\*\***

Heather hadn't been flying for long when she caught sight of Stoick returning home after a long day of chiefing. The burly elder Haddock saw her as well and waved. She swooped down and landed at his feet,

flicking her raven-colored hair back behind her.

"Hello sir," she said respectfully. "Did your duties go well?"

Stoick laughed and nodded. "Indeed they did. I had it easy today. How about you? Where are you off to in such a hurry?"

Heather gestured nonchalantly toward the sea and replied, "Breakneck Bog. Astrid suggested that I spend the night there. I've heard it's quite peaceful" for dragons, at least," she added with a grin.

The chief looked at her in surprise and mild concern. Of all the answers she could have given him, he certainly hadn't been expecting this one. He opened his mouth, paused, and then started again. "Astrid isn't trying to get rid of you, is she?" he asked suspiciously.

Heather only laughed. "No, I'm positive that's not it," she replied. "Anyways, have a good night's sleep, sir." She gave him a wave, then shapeshifted into her pure dragon form and flew out over the ocean.

Stoick stared after her for some time. He had noticed that Hiccup and his friends seemed a little more" how should he put it?" dramatic lately. They'd taken to laughing loudly in the Great Hall, for one thing, and then he had witnessed Snaketail stealing his son's leg a few days ago. Finally, there was that time when Fishlegs had offered to help unload the fishing boats

Shaking his head, Stoick lumbered up the hill to his house once more. \_I'm just overthinking this, \_he told himself. \_The teens are just spending a little more time together. It's not like their shenanigans are going to affect anyone else.\_

-.-.-.-.

**\*\*Breakneck Bog\*\***

Night had fallen an hour ago when Heather finally glimpsed the ring of rock spires that made up Breakneck Bog. The water in the middle of the circle was swampy and thick with plants and algae, and all the trees were on the top of the five rock islands that towered above the ocean. Waterfalls poured down from the airborne landmasses, filling the gulf in the center with swampy soup.

The Siren chose the largest of the spires as her rest stop. Flying over the forest, about fifty acres in diameter, she spied a likely roost and flew down, reverting to her part-human form just before landing. After all, her pure dragon form didn't have legs.

She had indeed chosen a good site to rest. This particular clearing didn't have any signs of wild dragons living nearby. Apart from the crickets loudly chirping away in the grass, and the occasional hoot of an owl, there was no sound. There was a single tree in this clearing, one that would definitely provide good shelter until dawn.

Heather flapped her wings all the way up the tree, spotting a nice,

sturdy branch about three-quarters of the way up. She landed gracefully on it, wrapping her talons around the limb and digging them in firmly. Sighing in a satisfied way, she wrapped her wings around herself and fell into a peaceful sleep.

\_Easiest dare ever.\_

-.-.-.-.-

\*\*Just wait, Heather. Just waitâ€¦\*\*

\*\*Also, have you "Legends are Born" readers ever wonder what a Siren looks like? Well, mosey on over to my Deviantart page to find out!  
User: Cm25.\*\*

\*\*Stop by with a review and dare suggestion, and I'll see you again soon for the next chapter!\*\*

\*\*Next chapter: Heather dares Ruffnut\*\*

## 8. Out With a Bang

\*\*This chapter is dedicated to Ferdoos' suggestion. Thank you for this simple yet genius idea.\*\*

-.-.-.-.-

Hiccup tiredly walked outside the next morning, rubbing the sleep from his eyes. Toothless had been pounding on the roof again, trying to get him to wake up so that they could go flying. He deeply breathed in the crisp, cold air, feeling refreshed as he did so.

"Yeah, yeah, I'm coming," he said in annoyance as Toothless gurgled impatiently. He yawned loudly, wishing that Toothless could stick to a normal sleeping routine. Lately, his sleep patterns had been somewhat erratic â€" sleeping in one day and then getting up early the next. Hiccup wondered if there was a reason for that.

"You can't wake me up early every day," Hiccup grumbled to the Night Fury as he tried to wake himself up. It didn't pay to fly the fastest dragon in the world when you were tired.

Just as he was about to climb aboard, there was a sudden screeching sound. He looked up towards the bright blue sky and saw a serpentine form streaking across the endless yonder. It was heading on a direct course for the Great Hall, and its scales glittered in the morning light.

"Looks like Heather's back," Hiccup murmured, as both he and Toothless regarded the flying Siren. "I wonder how she's doing after her night in Breakneck Bog."

Toothless looked at him in surprise. "Yeah, I know," he conceded. "I never told you that Astrid dared her to spend the night there. I'm sure she's fine if she's here now."

The Night Fury nodded in agreement, then grunted and gestured with his head to the sky. "Alright, let's go then," Hiccup said with a

chuckle, hopping aboard the saddle.

-.-.-.-.

**\*\*Great Hall\*\***

About thirty minutes later, Hiccup arrived at the Great Hall. Already, most of the adults were gone, having finished breakfast and already moving on to their work for the day. However, his friends were all still there, chatting and laughing as usual.

"Morning, gang," Hiccup said cheerfully, grabbing a chicken leg and a mug of yak milk. "How's everyone" â€" it was then that he noticed the condition Heather was in.

She looked awful, with her normally sleek black hair a complete mess. Her eyelids were drooping as if she could barely stay awake. Her clothes were scratched up a little bit, and she looked ready to collapse at any second.

"What happened?" Hiccup asked concernedly. Heather only groaned exhaustedly and slumped against Batwings. He held her comfortingly and replied, "A bunch of Smothering Smokebreaths woke her up in the middle of the night and mobbed her until she found a more secluded place to sleep."

"I was up all night after that," the girl in question said quietly. She rested her head against Batwings' shoulder and closed her eyes as if hoping to get a few moments of rest right then and there.

"At least you're safe," Astrid pointed out, surprisingly. Just because the two had made up after the whole Book of Dragons incident, didn't automatically make them best friends. In fact, Astrid was the second-last person Hiccup would have expected to hear those words from, after Snotlout.

"So, who are you going to dare?" Tuff asked while Ruff held him in a headlock.

Heather opened her eyes a crack and muttered, "Can't this wait until tomorrow? I need sleepâ€"|" She yawned deeply before closing her eyes again.

"Come on," Snotlout pressed. "Dare someone! I dare you to dare someone, in fact." He started pounding his fists on the table and chanting, "Dare! Dare! Dare!" but he stopped doing so when no one joined in.

"Fine," Heather said irritably, without opening her eyes. "I'm daring Ruff to blow something up."

The girl Thorston was so surprised that she dropped her brother on the floor. "You're serious?" she asked with a \_this-is-too-good-to-be-true\_ look on her face.

Heather yawned again and responded, "Yes. Make something explode. Go crazy. Just be smart about it."

Standing up just then, she muttered, "I'm going to go get some rest." She then trudged out of the Great Hall, with Batwings graciously

assisting her in case she pitched forward onto the ground.

"I can't believe I get to blow something up!" Ruffnut enthused. She was so happy that she helped Tuff off of the floor and hugged him.

"Sweet, can I help?" the boy asked, too lazy to extract himself from her embrace. His sister nodded, too ecstatic to deny him and shove him onto the floor again like she usually would.

Astrid took a gulp of milk and offered Hiccup a potato. "Just be smart about it, like Heather said," she warned. "We really don't want any severe repercussions if you decide to blow up Mildew's house or Gobber's forge."

Ruffnut stopped and thought about it, then grinned slyly as inspiration struck her.

"That smile doesn't look too good," Snaketail commented. Fishlegs stared at Ruff worriedly, wondering what she was thinking about and deciding that he didn't want to know.

"It's not too late to back out of this, you know," Arachne suggested. Ruff snapped out of her fantasy and retorted, "Are you kidding? I wouldn't back out of this if Tuff's life depended on it."

"So what else is new?" Hiccup muttered.

"Don't worry about a thing," Ruffnut continued. "No one will even notice, you'll see!"

"Good luck with that," Astrid remarked snidely.

Fishlegs just covered his face in his hands and moaned. "Why do I get the feeling we're really going to regret this?" he asked no one in particular.

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*Farming Grounds\*\***

The Thorston siblings and their dragon, the Zippleback twins Barf and Belch, snuck past Mulch and Bucket as the two comedic Vikings went about their duties. The duo was usually in charge of taking care of the barnyard animals, as they weren't really good warriors, and weren't the brightest of Vikings either (and that was saying something).

Ruff, Tuff, and the Zippleback all hid behind a large boulder as Mulch turned around to face their direction. "Bucket, please tell me I don't have to explain this to you again," he said sternly.

"No you don't," Bucket assured him, then suddenly scratched his bucket and asked, "Wait. Yaks lay eggs, right?"

The twins snickered and crept the distance that remained between them and the barn, making it without being seen. Smirking, they gestured for Barf and Belch to follow.

The two-headed dragon gurgled quietly in response and crawled rapidly



behind the barn, barely escaping the attention of Mulch, who had turned to face the boulder from which they had come out from behind.

"Coulda sworn I saw somethin' there," he muttered, before noticing Bucket again. "No, Bucket! You don't milk the chickens!"

While Tuff made sure Barf and Belch were in position, Ruff ran around to the other side of the barn to check on the Vikings' location. They were over by the chicken coop, their backs to them. Grinning, she gave her brother a thumbs-up.

"Alright, Barf. Gas!" she instructed the Zippleback's right head. She brought her hand to her mouth and mimed breathing gas. Barf opened her mouth and let a stream of gas hiss out to cover the barn.

"I love this part," Tuff smirked, as he and his sister ran to hide behind a rock. "Belch, spark!" he commanded, snapping his fingers. The Thorstons quickly ducked behind their rock as Belch lit his sister's gas with a \*kzatch\*!

The isle of Berk itself trembled as the barn exploded in a mighty conflagration of fire and smoke. Vikings all over looked up, scared out of their wits, as the demolished barn rained ash, wood, straw, and animal fur all over the village. Bucket's scream could be heard across the island as he instantly went into panic mode, and Mulch didn't even bother trying to calm him down as he ran in fear as well.

And then came the animals.

Yaks, goats, sheep, chickens, turkeys, and more bellowed and squawked in terror as the barn was violently destroyed. Even as the smoke billowed out from the explosion and obscured the entire farmlands, the stampede of barnyard animals rushed out from the blackness, down the mountains, and into the village.

Complete and utter chaos ensued as the terrified animals rampaged through the village. Those few Vikings who didn't flee in terror boldly ran toward the herd with the intent of catching them and putting them back into their pens. However, the herd slammed into them with the might of Thor's lightning, sending them running with the other Vikings.

Meanwhile, in the town square, Mildew was wheeling his cabbages down to the docks, ready to be shipped off to Bog-Burglar Island (which was in the middle of a vegetable shortage). The ground began to tremble, and the old man's eyes grew wide as he saw the immense stampede rushing right toward him. He gave a high-pitched scream of fear just before he fell and was trampled under their hooves.

Ruff and Tuff observed all of this from their vantage point on the decimated farm. "Do you think this was what Heather had in mind?" Ruff asked her brother, plucking a hard-boiled egg from the ground and popping it into her mouth.

"No, but at least no one noticed," Tuff said, very satisfied with their work.

If they had been paying closer attention, perhaps they would have

heard the bellowing roar and strong wingbeats of Thornado just behind them.

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\*\*â€| â€| â€| Wow. The twins definitely have some terrible repercussions in store for themâ€|\*\*

\*\*Heather: "I thought I told you to be smart about this."\*\*

\*\*Ruff: "It was smart! Blowing up the barn was GENIUS!"\*\*

\*\*Tuff: "How come we haven't thought of that before?"\*\*

\*\*Heather: "â€|Because neither of you have brains."\*\*

\*\*Anyway, please review and give me a dare suggestion if inspiration strikes you.\*\*

\*\*Next chapter: Ruffnut dares Batwings\*\*

## 9. Please Don't Eelaborate

\*\*This dare was suggested by ShadentheDragon. It was originally for Heather, but Batwings works just as well.\*\*

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It was another two weeks before Hiccup and the group were able to meet up in the Great Hall again. The incident known island-wide as the "Barnyard Blow-up" had kept every Viking up and on their feet for days on end. Needless to say, Stoick had almost blown a blood vessel when he discovered that Ruff and Tuff were behind it.

The sheer magnitude of the damage was mind-boggling. After Stoick led a squadron of dragons to herd the animals onto Thor's Beach â€" the huge cliffs would effectively prevent any animals from escaping â€" he had immediately set to work building a new barn while Mulch and Bucket took care of the animals. A team of Vikings, which included Ruff and Tuff, helped build the barn as well as new pens for the yaks and sheep.

Meanwhile, the village was also undergoing massive repairs. These included everything from rebuilding entire houses to sweeping chicken feathers off the shelves. There were also numerous injuries â€" at least one Viking had gotten an eye clawed out by a rogue turkey, and others had broken bones after being trampled by yaks. Mildew himself sported embarrassing wounds after an irate goat had rammed him. Goathi was working overtime.

None of the teens were sleeping through this. Instead, they and their dragons helped as best as they could. Fishlegs and Meatlug watched over the animals on Thor's Beach and made sure none of them managed to get out. Astrid and Stormfly assisted in nailing new shingles to roofs. Hiccup and Toothless flew from one end of the island to another, helping wherever they could.

Finally, enough of the village had been fixed so that everyone could basically get back to their normal lives.

When Hiccup ran into the Great Hall to meet his friends at their usual table, he found Astrid pinning Ruff to a wall while Batwings dangled Tuff from a rafter near the ceiling. Even Fishlegs looked mad.

"What. The Hel. Were you thinking?!" Astrid demanded, twisting Ruff's arm behind her back. The other girl tried to answer, but the only thing that came out of her mouth was a squeak of pain.

"Please don't blame her, Astrid," Heather protested. "I was the one that suggested it. If anyone should be blamed, it should be me."

"You weren't very specific about your dare," Fishlegs pointed out. "You also warned her to be smart about what they blew up. So it isn't your fault at all." Despite his assurances, the Siren still looked guilty.

"It was so worth it!" Tuff yelled as Batwings momentarily dropped him, then caught him again and flipped him upside-down. "You guys just don't know how to have fun." He stuck his tongue out at the others watching him from the floor.

"Is this really necessary?" Hiccup asked, trying to pry Astrid away from the girl twin. "Yes, actually," she replied, shaking him off.

"We only caused you guys a few weeks' worth of hard work!" Ruff squeaked. "Are you telling me you can't handle that?" She shut up when Astrid slammed her into the wall again.

Arachne kicked her in the shin. "We were working our butts off non-stop!" the ten-year-old said with a scowl. But before she could continue, Hiccup gently held her back.

"Please, guys," he said wearily. "Just let them go. They've already been punished, remember? They practically built the barn by themselves."

There was a long moment of silence. But finally, Astrid released her grip on Ruff, and Batwings slowly lowered Tuff to the ground, but ended up 'accidentally' dropping him while the male Thorston was still a couple of meters in the air. His helmet struck the floor with a loud \*clang\*.

"Now, to business. Who's getting dared next?" Snotlout asked, crossing his arms.

"Is it really smart to continue this?" Hiccup asked. "I think we should just call it off for the safety of the island."

Snaketail waved it off. "We'll be more careful from now on," she assured him nonchalantly. "And we haven't got to humiliate anyone in weeks! Come on, Ruffnut, pick someone to dare."

The long-haired blonde looked around at the group with bored, heavy-lidded eyes. It's not like any of the dares to come will be as awesome as the last one, she thought.

"I'm going to dare Batwings," she finally said. The Siren dropped to the ground and folded his wings with a sigh. "Please tell me you're not going to use me to burn something down," he said to her.

Ruffnut pouted. "Aw, that was what I was going to suggest," she protested, but gave in anyway. She figured he'd turn that suggestion down. But then, she brightened as she thought of something new.

"Alright then," Ruff said triumphantly. "I dare you to eat an eel."

Batwings scoffed. "Is that it?" he challenged. "You do know that we Sirens are one of the only dragons that eat eels regularly, right?"

Snotlout jumped in, eager to liven up the dare. "How about if the eel was still alive?" he asked, eyes glittering mischievously. "Is that enough for you?"

"Fine," Batwings conceded. "At least it wouldn't be as bad as drinking Astrid's yaknog." He gasped with pain as said girl crashed her fist into his shoulder.

Ruff ran off to find a live eel and came back about five minutes later with the slimy serpent thrashing in her hand. "One of the fishing boats had a few," she explained, rapidly handing the eel to Batwings. "Now eat up, it probably won't be alive for long judging from the way its gills are flapping."

Batwings swallowed thickly as he viewed the eel up close. It was a small one, about a foot long, but its snapping jaws were full of needle-sharp teeth. He really didn't want to think of what would happen if those punctured his esophagus on the way down " or if it didn't cooperate and went down the wrong pipe.

Finally, he decided that he'd have to eat it tail-first. Bracing himself, he closed his eyes and shoved its tail into his mouth.

"That's really disgusting," Snaketail commented, as Fishlegs covered his mouth and Hiccup looked away. Even Snotlout looked put off as they observed the squirming eel slid bit by bit into Batwings' mouth and down his throat.

Finally, the eel's head vanished, and Batwings swallowed one last time. He shuddered as he felt the serpent sliding into his stomach, thrashing all the while. "Ugh, you really don't want to experience this," he muttered, clutching his neck lightly.

But just then, he winced and held his belly. "Oh no," he croaked, turning a pasty green color. "What is it?" Heather asked worriedly, but at the same time asking herself if she really wanted to know.

Batwings winced again and doubled over, as if he was having a really bad cramp. "It's still thrashing in there!" he blurted, trying not to be sick.

Fishlegs paled at the thought and re-clamped his hands over his

mouth. Ruff and Tuff snickered. Snotlout backed away, and Hiccup gulped and looked as if he were about to be sick himself.

"Needâ€¦ fresh airâ€¦" Batwings mumbled, staggering to the door. Heather followed him, concerned for his health. For the second time in as many weeks, the two Sirens walked out, this time with their positions reversed.

"That has to be the most disgusting thing I've ever witnessed," Astrid muttered, wrapping her arm around Hiccup's shoulders as he breathed deeply through his mouth, trying to get rid of the nausea.

"Are you kidding? That was great," Ruff smirked. "We need more gruesome things like that to happen."

"Oh really?" Astrid asked scathingly. "Ever wonder what color your innards are? Because when Batwings gets better, he's going to rip you apart."

Ruffnut's eyes widened, and Tuff laughed. "I'd love to see that," he sneered, shoving his sister's helmet over his eyes.

Readjusting it, she replied, "Yeah, that would be so cool! I've always wanted to see my insides!"

"Well, prepare for them to become your outsides," Snaketail said warily, pointing to the door. Batwings and Heather were coming back in, with the former looking weak, but otherwise fine as he slowly advanced on the girl that had put him through so much pain and suffering.

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**\*\*Uh oh. Ruffnut managed to get an angry dragon on her tail!\*\***

**\*\*Poor Batwings, though. I almost threw up myself trying to imagine what it would be like to swallow a live eel. Or any live animal, really.\*\***

**\*\*We have one last person to dare before the gang moves on to Round 2! Leave a review and dare suggestion, and see you then!\*\***

**\*\*Next chapter: Batwings dares Arachne\*\***

## 10. Go to Hel-met

**\*\*This dare was requested by an anonymous guest. I originally had this very same dare planned for Hiccup later on, but I decided to use it for Arachne instead.\*\***

**\*\*I hate driving lessons, they're tedious and they cut into writing time.\*\***

-.---.--.

Surprisingly, Batwings didn't rip Ruffnut to shreds upon recovering from his earlier harrowing ordeal â€" swallowing a live eel and

forcing to endure its thrashing until it suffocated.

Anyone else would have done it â€" even Hiccup would have tried if he had been forced to go through that internal agony. But to everyone's shock, the one person with the ability to do just that took it uncharacteristically well.

"It was her dare, and I accepted it," Batwings confessed. "I feel obligated to live with the consequences and just let them slide. It's partially my fault, and I doubt Ruff had such an outcome in mind. If I'm getting payback, it's going to be when I next dare someone."

Ruff let out the breath she never knew she was holding. "And for a second there, I thought you were going to kill me," she said, relieved. "So did I," Tuffnut agreed, looking disappointed.

"Anyway, I'm willing to put this behind me," Batwings continued, retching a little as his stomach gave a leftover lurch. He flexed his wings to steady himself and went on, "Now, as for who I'm going to dare, I'm going with the one who hasn't had a chance to do something yet. I'm daring Arachne."

The girl sighed. "I should have seen this coming," she said to herself.

"Just don't pick anything tooâ€¦| drastic," Astrid cautioned, coming to the defense of her sister. "She's only ten years old."

Batwings held up his hands in protest. "Yes, I'm well aware of that," he replied. "I have a reasonably good dare for Arachne, something that shouldn't be too much trouble for herâ€¦|"

Snotlout was impatient, and disappointed that he didn't get to see Ruff get mauled, which added up to a bad mood. "Well?" he demanded. "Let's hear it already!"

The Siren stifled a burp as his stomach lurched again, and when he was certain he wasn't going to throw up, he gave Arachne her dare. "Your dare," he told her, "is to steal and hide Stoick the Vast's helmet."

Several people gasped at this. Hiccup was one of the loudest. They all knew the consequences of what could happen if things went wrong. Arachne could get banished, for one thing, if she was caught, and if the helmet wasn't foundâ€¦| then things on Berk could get pretty nasty.

"Do you have any idea what you just told Arachne to do?" Fishlegs asked worriedly. Batwings shrugged and responded, "Not really. I'm not all that familiar with you Vikings or your nonsense ideology."

Fishlegs gulped, then recited, "If the helmet of a Chief is lost and then found by someone other than said Chief, then the discoverer of the helmet can potentially gain power over the Chief by holding onto it as a sort of hostage. Stoick's helmet is one of the symbols that pretty much mark him as the Chief. If he loses it, then the villagers might either lose faith in Stoick or pick a new Chief entirely."

Batwings turned pale. "Oh," he said simply, not having known that particular bit of information. "Should I change the dare then? I really don't want things getting out of hand."

"No, it's fine," came the reply, and everyone looked over at Arachne, who was surprisingly calm. "I accept the dare and am prepared to live with the consequences. I'm certain I can pull it off without anything too bad happening."

"Are you absolutely certain about this, Arachne?" Astrid asked concernedly. "There are too many things that could go wrong."

Her sister waved it off. "I'll be fine," she assured her older sister cheerfully. "I know just when to take it, and just where to hide it. Everything will be okay, I swear."

She then turned to Hiccup and pleaded, "Don't tell your dad that I'm the one that did it, all right?" The scrawny boy looked extremely reluctant, but at last gave a begrudging nod.

While initially stunned at the magnitude of the dare's consequences, Batwings and Heather now looked rather unconcerned. When they thought about it, they decided that Berk's political matters didn't really affect them – they could just fly back to Siren Island and start a new life there. That wasn't to say that they'd be worried about their friends in the process, but at least they'd be alright.

As it turned out, no one even had to worry. Arachne, true to her word, knew just what to do in order to ensure Stoick could keep his job.

-.-.-.-.-

**\*\*Hiccup's House\*\***

The sun had set, and night had fallen. Vikings all over Berk had long since retreated into their homes and were now soundly sleeping. No creature on Earth slept deeper than a tired Viking. Or snored louder.

Arachne quietly ran across the village after determining that there was no one lingering outside. She reached Hiccup's house within a minute, and it was then that she allowed utmost caution to take over. She could not allow anyone to wake up and witness what she was about to do.

As silently as the girl was able, she pried the door open and hesitantly peeked in. There was no one in sight. Toothless' rumbling snores could be heard coming from upstairs in Hiccup's room. But from behind a door on the far side of the room, an even louder noise could be heard.

Curious, Arachne crept across the room, leaving the door wide open in case she needed a speedy escape. She crossed the dark wooden space relatively quickly, making sure that the wooden floorboards wouldn't squeak loudly when she stepped on them. Opening the door, she allowed a moment to assess what lay inside.

Stoick the Vast lay on his massive bed, the blanket that

covered him not doing a very good job of doing so. In fact, all that it covered was his impressive chest and stomach. He was still in the clothes he worked in every day " after all, he wouldn't be very Chief-ly if a crisis happened in the middle of the night and he was forced to answer the call in his pajamas. The room itself trembled from the sheer volume of his snores.

Arachne had never heard the roar of the Red Death, but she felt that this noise came close to it in terms of enormity.

Quickly, her eyes flashed across the room, noting the boots on the floor, the sword hanging on the wall, the Viking-sized closet, the horned helmet perched on the footboard" \_aha!\_

More silently than a Whispering Death's murmur, she tip-toed to Stoick's bed and snatched the helmet. \_Now,\_ she thought, \_I just need to find a place to hide it.\_

Arachne crept back out of the room and searched for a good place to stash the helmet. It needed to be good enough so that Stoick wouldn't find it immediately, but bad enough so that he wouldn't spend hours searching, hours that would most likely cause him to tear out his beard in anxiety.

Finally, the girl hung the helmet on the coat-hanger, and then covered it with Stoick's fur cloak. She stepped back to admire her work, deemed it satisfactory, and quietly walked back out of the house.

When she had shut the door, Arachne bolted across the village and back to her house, silent as a spider. After all, her name wasn't "Arachne" for nothing.

-.-.-.-.-

The next morning, Hiccup awoke to a crashing, clattering noise from downstairs. Toothless sat up, looking fully alert with his ears perked and his wide eyes directed at the staircase. "What in Odin's name" Hiccup muttered, jumping out of bed and walking down the stairs.

When he was about halfway down, he noticed his dad rummaging around the room, crawling on his hands and knees. He turned over the table and chairs without a second thought, muttering to himself.

"Um, you alright, Dad?" Hiccup asked curiously with a hint of worry buried in his voice.

Stoick suddenly jerked upright, banging his head on his usual chair. "OW! Oh, morning, son," he said, rubbing his head. "Hiccup, I need your help. My helmet is missing! I just hope that someone didn't make off with it" Mildew or Madguts would undoubtedly do something awful if they got their hands on my helmet"

He went back to searching, not seeing Hiccup roll his eyes nor hearing him sigh heavily.

"Come on, bud," he said to Toothless, who had followed him downstairs. "Let's help, and I hope Arachne was smart about where she hid it"



-.-.-.-.-

**\*\*People in those days probably had a lot of folklore and superstitions, and I can certainly imagine the Chief's helmet being a pretty important symbolic item in terms of Chief-dom. Arachne probably would have been tied to a mast and shipped off if she had been caught in the act.\*\***

**\*\*Well, now that everyone's been dared, Round 2 shall commence! New and ever more embarrassing dares await the teens as, unbeknownst to them, the adults slowly begin to notice their island-shaking exploitsâ€|\*\***

**\*\*Review and give me some new suggestions, and I'll see you soon!\*\***

**\*\*Next chapter: Arachne dares Astrid\*\***

## 11. A Change in Fashion

**\*\*Ugh, couldn't think of a good pun for the title of this chapter. That makes me mad.\*\***

**\*\*Anyway, thanks again to Ferdoos for this suggestion, as well as StoryGirl.\*\***

**\*\*Sorry for not posting this sooner. I was at my grandmother's house for three days, without Internet â€" and then the day I came back, the power went out and I couldn't post it then, either.\*\***

-.-.-.-.-

When Astrid saw Arachne again, it was the early morning. The older girl was awakened by Stormfly's hungry screech. Yawning widely and irritably, she grabbed her axe and shoulder pads and stumbled outside to the yard, where her Nadder slept just outside her room.

Her little sister was already up and at 'em, tending to Rilebolt. The Skrill was eagerly gulping down a huge basket full of chicken legs. Chicken had the mysterious effect of increasing Rilebolt's strength and stamina, thus allowing her to fly at even faster speeds. Ever since Arachne had discovered this, the dragon had refused to eat anything else, knowing that she'd finally stumbled on a way to best her eternal rival, Toothless, at flying.

"Morning, sister!" Arachne called, waving Astrid over. The latter girl picked up a heavy basket of salmon waiting for her next to the door and heaved it over to Stormfly. The Nadder was, as always, preening and making sure she looked presentable to the other dragons. Of course, being a Nadder, Stormfly was in her opinion never presentable enough.

However, the dragon was willing to stop her morning routine in order to greet Astrid with a happy chirp and lick across her cheek. She grinned and scratched Stormfly behind her head spikes, then opened the basket and allowed her access to her breakfast.

"So, how'd it go last night?" Astrid inquired of her younger sister.

Arachne scoffed and waved a dismissive hand at her. "It was easier than I expected," she replied. "Stoick sleeps heavier than a bear in hibernation. I just took the helmet and hid it underneath his fur coat."

"Well, at least you didn't hide it where someone else could find it," Astrid admitted.

Arachne nodded and began dusting off Rilebolt's scales. Constantly crackling with static electricity, the Skrill was a literal dust magnet.

Just then, the two girls looked up to see Stoick walking past, fully dressed and with his impressive helmet indeed sitting on his head. However, the Chief would constantly roll his eyes upward and reach up with his hand, as if checking if his helmet was still there. He then meandered off towards the plaza.

"Thank Odin he found it," Arachne said with a sigh of relief.

Astrid nodded and agreed, "It must have been really nerve-wracking for him when he couldn't find that helmet first thing in the morning."

They were silent for a few seconds before Astrid spoke up again. "Are you coming to the Academy this morning? Hiccup said he'd be doing an early lesson today."

"Yep!" the younger Hofferson said cheerfully. "I like hanging out with you guys. It's so much more fun than waiting around the house with Mom trying to teach me to be a lady." She shuddered at the thought, but suddenly brightened and looked at her older sister craftily.

"Speaking of which," she mused, "I have to dare someone now, don't I?"

Astrid nodded, and Arachne grinned in anticipation. "Awesome!" she enthused. "I'm going to dare you, Astrid!"

Said girl rolled her eyes in exasperation. "Why me?" she asked.

"Because you're my sister, and I know exactly what to do in order to embarrass you," Arachne said matter-of-factly.

Astrid considered that. "Point taken," she conceded. "So what's my dare, then? If I have to kiss Snotlout, I'm hanging you up as Timberjack bait."

The ten-year-old giggled at the thought of not being strung up for the dragons, obviously, but the other part. "Oh, that would be priceless," she laughed, slowly calming down. "But don't worry, I know not to give you any dares like that."

Arachne finished cleaning her dragon and looked at Astrid thoughtfully. "Hmm, I think I've got it," she finally said. "I dare

you, sister, to wear a frilly dress to the Academy and then tell Hiccup you love him."

Her sister's eyes widened and her mouth fell open. Arachne tried to hold in her laughter at Astrid's reaction. Her right eye was twitching and she seemed totally appalled at the very thought of doing such a thing. \_Wait, what if that dare was a little too much? \_Arachne worried.

Finally, Astrid composed herself and turned back toward Stormfly. Facing away from Arachne, she muttered audibly, "If you weren't my sister, I'd push you off a cliff and into the sea as a snack for the Scauldrons."

Arachne grinned. She'd won. Now all she had to do was look forward to the upcoming spectacle at the Berk Dragon Academy.

-.-.-.-.

**\*\*Arena\*\***

Hiccup couldn't help wondering why Arachne was in such a good mood. She had come about an hour earlier with Rilebolt nipping at her heels â€" and then Toothless' tail, from which Hiccup had to separate her. For some reason that no one could put their finger on, she was grinning like a maniac and giggling to herself.

"What's gotten you in such a good mood today?" Tuff asked bluntly. "My troll of a sister is never that happy, not even when she breathes too much of Barf's gas."

Ruffnut then commenced beating him with his own helmet until he was sprawled out on the ground and smiling stupidly. "I love the taste of hard gravel in the morning," he muttered contentedly.

Arachne giggled again at some secret thought and explained, "Let's just say that something really good is going to happen in a few minutes."

"Tuffnut getting revenge on Ruffnut for what just happened?" guessed Snaketail.

"Hookfang and Barf and Belch fighting again?" hazarded Ruff.

"Hookfang and Barf and Belch fighting because of Ruff getting revenge on Tuff?" questioned Snotlout.

The girl shook her head and grinned even wider.

"Please tell me that this doesn't have anything to do with a dare you issued someone this morning?" moaned Batwings, clutching his head â€" he had woken up with a huge headache, and this dare war probably wasn't going to help his suffering at all.

"Bingo," Arachne said triumphantly. "I dared Astrid to do something that she really did not want to do."

"I was wondering what was taking Astrid so long," Hiccup said,

frowning with worry. "You didn't tell her to steal another pair of Gobber's undies, right?"

Thankfully, the younger Hofferson shook her head. "Nah, she got in a lot of hot water when she did that, so I didn't want her to get on Gobber's bad side again."

Fishlegs looked left and right before saying, "I don't see Astrid anywhere! Are we going to start the lesson now?" He had been looking forward to this one all week â€" Physiology of Dragon Wings and Tails and How they Help in Flight.

"Um, you guys might want to turn aroundâ€|" Heather said with the ghost of a smile on her face.

Everyone did so â€" and their jaws practically hit the floor in unison.

"Whoa, look at Astrid!" snickered Tuff, pointing.

Indeed, the scowling girl was wearing something no one could have expected in several million years â€" a plain white dress that conformed to her physique and that had frilly lace around the edge of the skirt, sleeves, and neck. It looked like something one would wear at a wedding.

All in all, Astrid looked prettier than usual despite the look of pure murder she was giving her sister.

Hiccup was completely flabbergasted and blushing faintly, unwilling to stare but not being able to help himself. Ruff's eyes were as wide as they could go. Arachne was in the middle of a giggling fit. Snotloutâ€| well, let's just say he was behaving rather predictably.

Until Astrid nearly broke his arm.

"This was your dare?" Batwings asked Arachne, both eyebrows disappearing underneath his hair.

"Just wait, it gets better," the little girl wheezed, wiping a tear from her eye.

And indeed it did. Astrid took a deep breath to calm herself before taking long, slow strides towards Hiccup. The lanky boy grew more and more frightened as she advanced on him, clearly not wanting to experience her anger and frustration firsthand.

He was pretty pale by the time Astrid reached him. She glared at him for a few seconds while he frantically tried to figure out what he did wrong. Then her stare softened as she leaned forward and tenderly kissed him.

Hiccup was surprised, to say the least. He had no idea what was bringing this on, but he was never one to pass up a kiss from his girlfriend. He tentatively pushed forward and responded to her affection in kind, prompting her to giggle softly and push the kiss deeper.

After about thirty seconds, they broke apart, faces flushed and

breathing hard from their momentary lack of oxygen. "What, that's it?" Arachne demanded. "You were supposed to tell him that you loved him!"

Astrid rolled her eyes and crossed her arms. "I did," she replied. "I just didn't use words." She gave Hiccup a wink, to which he smiled and turned a brighter shade of red.

"That's dumb," her sister sulked, slumping against Rilebolt's flank.

There was a stunned silence that pervaded the arena for a few moments. Then Tuff broke it with a blunt, "Well that was awkward."

"It was cute," Ruff smirked.

"It was, wasn't it?" Heather said teasingly.

"No, that was just depressing," Snotlout mumbled.

"We can argue over what it was later," Hiccup interrupted. "Why don't we get to the lesson now?"

"Finally!" exclaimed Fishlegs.

Astrid held up a hand. "Hang on," she said. "Hold the lesson until I finally get out of this stupid thing." She scowled as she regarded the dress she was trapped in.

Snotlout looked hopeful until Astrid left the arena to get changed into her regular clothes. Then his expression changed to one of disappointment as he lay down against Hookfang's side.

"That dare wasn't too bad," Snaketail said with a shrug.

Batwings agreed, "Yes, you're right. It was humiliating but not harmful." The male Siren spared Ruff a hard look before yawning and curling up on the ground beside Nightshade, shapeshifting as he did so. Heather joined him after a moment.

Hiccup stared at the exit from where Astrid had left and murmured to himself, "It wasn't \_that\_ humiliating, to tell the truthâ€¦"

-.-.-.-.-

\*\*A lot of you submitted dares that involved Hiccup, and it was pretty hard to choose between all of them, to be completely honest. So I went with the two best suggestions instead of just a single one.\*\*

\*\*Anyway, this chapter was less funny than it was â€" what's the expression? "Fluffy"? â€" but hopefully we can get back to the humor in the next chapter.\*\*

\*\*Speaking of which, review in the meantime and look forward to what happens next!\*\*

\*\*Next chapter: Astrid dares Ruffnut\*\*

## 12. Actions Speak Louder than Words

**\*\*Yes, they do, unfortunately.\*\***

**\*\*This dare was suggested a while ago by ShadentheDragon.\*\***

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*Great Hall\*\***

Thankfully, Astrid was back to her old cheerful self by the time dinnertime rolled around. Of course, that was due to her being back in her usual clothes and not the garment-which-could-not-be-named.

"Ah, it's nice to be able to move again!" Astrid sighed, stretching exaggeratedly. "You have no idea how liberating it is to be out of that you-know-what."

"And we never will have an idea, because none of us will ever be caught dead in one of those," Snaketail remarked snidely.

Astrid brightened and looked slyly across the table at Snotlout. "Hmm, that gives me an ideaâ€|" she mused with a smirk.

The Jorgenson boy nearly choked on his turkey leg. "Nuh-uh! No way! I am NOT wearing a dress, no matter who dares me!"

"You do know that it'll cost you one of your three chances if you refuse, right?" Batwings pointed out. "Then you'll be that much closer to losing."

"A pity, he'd look good in a dress," Heather sneered.

Snotlout said nothing, but he flushed beet red and stuffed his face with turkey so he wouldn't be tempted to say something that he would regret.

"Speaking of which, you should wear dresses more often, Astrid," Ruffnut said cheekily. "It looked very slimming on y â€" OW!" she grunted as she got slugged hard in the shoulder.

"Oh, you think so, do you?" the Hofferson girl retorted. "I'll have you know that it was the most embarrassing thing I've ever had to go through!"

Hiccup looked nervously from one girl to the other as they glared daggers at each other. "Can we all please just calm down?" he asked, but they paid no attention to him.

"It can't have been that bad," Ruff said.

"Believe me, it was," spat Astrid.

"Really? So you won't be able to think of any worse dares?" the girl Thorston asked.

"You want to bet?" challenged Astrid. "I've got plenty of unpleasant dares worked out for \_you\_."

Ruff leaned back in her seat and grinned. "Bring it on. You're talking to the girl who blew up the barn and indirectly destroyed the village, and enjoyed it. There's nothing I can't handle."

"You barely handled building the new barn, as I recall," Fishlegs said before being silenced by a glare from Ruffnut.

Astrid grinned mirthlessly in anticipation. "Oh, I'm going to love seeing you try to handle this," she laughed. "I dare you to go one day without fighting with Tuffnut. In fact, you have to be nice to him."

Ruff's eyes bugged out and the corner of her mouth twitched. "That's impossible," she objected.

"Whatever happened to 'there's nothing I can't handle'?" mocked Astrid with a satisfied smirk on her face.

"She has a point," Hiccup agreed.

"Hey, where is Tuff anyway?" Arachne asked dubiously, looking around for him.

She was answered by the sound of a door slamming. "Hey guys," Tuff said, bored. He sat down and shoved his sister out of the way before stealing a fistful of potatoes from her plate.

Astrid, Hiccup, and everyone else were all looking at Ruffnut expectantly. She picked herself up and met each of their gazes, only to end up sighing and giving in. She turned toward her brother, looking absolutely pained about what she had to do.

Tuff was looking at her, expecting her to shove him back and lash him with a few dirty words in the process. But his sister just forced a smile and spoke in a voice that was supposed to be calm, but carried an undercurrent of hostility.

"H-Hey, Tuff, what t-took you so long? I was getting w-worried," she stammered, forcing the falsely kind words out.

\_I will kill you, Astrid,\_ she seethed inwardly.

Her brother was looking at her with bewilderment. "Um, well, I kinda ruined Dad's Gronckle's saddle, so he forced me to help Gobber fix it. Why, what's it to you?" he added rudely.

Although Ruff looked like she wanted nothing more than to punch him in the face for using that tone with her, she held herself in check and gave him another fake smile. "Oh, n-no reason. No reason at all!" she said innocently. "I was just wondering, that's it. C-could you pass the salt, p-please?"

Now Tuffnut was completely dumbfounded. Everyone else was impressed that Ruffnut even knew the word 'please', and even more so that she was able to say it to her brother.

"Has she been breathing Zippleback gas again?" the Thorston boy

whispered across the table to Fishlegs. He caught Ruff's death stare and gave a little squeak of fright, frantically shaking his head.

"Well then, what's wrong with her?" Tuff asked bluntly, throwing the question to the group.

"No idea," Astrid chirped merrily.

"None whatsoever," agreed Batwings.

"Maybe she's getting tired of fighting with you," suggested Arachne.

Ruffnut looked like she was going to explode with rage and frustration at the situation she was stuck in. But she faked a sweet tone and answered, "Tuff, would you be a good brother and smack Astrid for me?"

When Tuff looked over and met the Hofferson girl's glare, he shook his head, forgetting to be shocked or confused at Ruffnut's sudden politeness. "Nah, I don't hit girls," he said.

"Scared?" Heather asked him with a smile.

"Yeah, that's probably it," Tuff replied halfheartedly, still looking at his sister like she had grown another head. "Seriously, what's gotten into you?" he asked, not rudely but with genuine interest.

It took all of Ruff's willpower not to crack and beat him with her turkey leg.

"Oh yeah, that reminds me!" Snaketail said brightly. "Are we going to go flying tonight?"

"Argh, I completely forgot about that!" Hiccup muttered, chastising himself for forgetting. "Yeah, I know Snaketail, Astrid, and Snotlout are all going to be joining me. What about the rest of you?"

"\_Noooooo\_ thanks," Fishlegs said instantly. "Meatlug's scared of the dark."

"I'll bet," Astrid smirked, making the Ingerman blush.

"I can't," Arachne said dejectedly. "Mom wants me in bed by sunset."

"Neither can I," Batwings replied with a loud yawn, and Heather nodded her agreement. "You know me â€" I can barely stay awake at \_this\_ un-Thor-ly hour, much less past it. Heather, you can go if you want," he added.

"No, I'm not going if you aren't," the female Siren replied loyally.

"I guess I could come too," Tuff said with his signature grin. "What about you, sis? You wanna come along?"

Everyone's mouths opened in a collective gape. Ruff's forced



politeness was subconsciously convincing Tuff to return it!

The girl twin grinned "although whether it was real or not couldn't be told. "Sure. I kind of have to though, don't I? Same dragon and all that."

Everyone got up from the table and walked outside, except for the ones who wouldn't be joining them. The twins were leading while the others lagged behind.

"Can you believe that she was actually able to finish dinner without fighting with Tuff once?" Snaketail enthused.

"Yeah, that was pretty unbelievable," Hiccup agreed.

Just then, there was a shout from up ahead. "I'll show you fat!" shrieked Ruffnut, pouncing on her brother and sending them tumbling down the huge staircase leading down into the village, fighting all the way down.

"Never mind," Snotlout snorted, peering down to watch them.

"I knew it was too good to be true," Snaketail sighed.

Astrid was grinning. "Well, she failed the dare," she said, satisfaction written all over her voice. "Guess that means she's one step closer to losing this dare war!"

Meanwhile, the sounds of the twins' shouts came loud and clear as they brawled at the bottom of the staircase.

-.---.--.

Stoick and Gobber paused their hearty meal to stare over at the table the teens always sat at. The majority of them had left, except for Batwings, Heather, Fishlegs, and Arachne.

"Yup, they're up ta somethin'," Gobber said. "The twins've never spent a single meal in here without fightin'. I think yeh were right when yeh made yer suspicions known."

The Chief nodded and took a swig of his ale. "Let's see," he mused, starting to count on his fingers. "First you say that Hiccup and Snotlout came to you with unusual requests, then I saw Snaketail steal my son's leg in broad daylight. Then there was the time Fishlegs asked me to help haul in the fleet's catch, then when Astrid got unusually sick, and finally when the Out "ahem, dragon girl apparently went to spend the night in Breakneck Bog, of all places!"

Gobber raised his eyebrows. "Call it a crazy hunch, but I have meself a feelin' that somethin' mighty fishy is goin' on around here, and it concerns them teens."

His friend patted his head to reassure himself that his helmet was still on his head. He definitely hadn't yet forgotten waking up to find his helmet missing, or finding that the twins were behind the massive stampede a few weeks ago. Those were just more examples of the unusual activity happening on Berk these days.

\_Just what are Hiccup and his friends up to?\_ Stoick wondered.

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*That's our first failure. Strike one for Ruffnut!\*\***

**\*\*Looks like Stoick and Gobber are starting to catch on! How long will it be before they finally step in and try to interfere with the dare war? And will Hiccup and the gang come up with creative ways to avoid the adults if this happens?\*\***

**\*\*Review and send a dare suggestion, please! See you later!\*\***

**\*\*Next chapter: Ruffnut dares Hiccup\*\***

### 13. A Rough Dare from Ruffnut

**\*\*This dare was suggested by CeCdancer. It's nothing special, but it'll work, I guess.\*\***

**\*\*Also, school's started for me, so these chapters will be published at a slower rate.\*\***

-.--.-.-.

Hiccup woke up once again to the sound of rattling shingles. He groaned and stumbled out of bed, yawning deeply and basically acting dramatic. "That overgrown newt had better find a stable sleeping pattern soon," he muttered to himself. "I'm going crazy with this 'waking-up-early-then-suddenly-waking-up-late-the- next-day' thing."

The scrawny boy went outside, where the chilly morning air hit him like a fist, waking him up almost immediately. He looked directly upwards to see Toothless sitting there on the roof, giving the boy his signature smile.

"Good morning, Mr. Bossy," Hiccup said, unable to prevent himself from breaking out in a grin. Toothless' smile was definitely infectious. "Sorry, but I'm going to have to wake up a little more before we can go flying this morning, alright?"

The Night Fury gave a disappointed moan, but that quickly changed to a happy purr when Hiccup scratched him behind the ears.

Hiccup suddenly looked past Toothless and saw a crowd of Vikings already heading up the stairs to the Great Hall. He saw that some of his friends were among them.

"Toothless, you mind if we go flying right after I have breakfast?" the Haddock boy asked. "It won't take long for me to get something to eat and shake off this fatigue."

Toothless gurgled understandingly and licked his friend across the face, showing him that he didn't mind. As long as they got to go flying, he didn't really mind how long it took for Hiccup to get ready.

Hiccup said good-bye to Toothless and headed towards the Great Hall. If all went as planned, he'd grab breakfast, eat and talk with his friends, leave in good spirits, and " having woken up fully " go flying with Toothless.

However, the scrawny Chief-to-be should have been smart enough to remember that with his whacky group of friends, things rarely, if ever, went as planned.

When he entered the Great Hall, Hiccup immediately slouched slightly and rolled his eyes in exasperation. The only free spot at his and his friends' usual table was between Snotlout, who was never a pleasant boy to sit next to, and Ruffnut, who took every opportunity she could get to wrest him away from Astrid so that she could have her way with him.

But Hiccup wasn't one to let an unfortunate seating arrangement get him down. So he perked himself up, grabbed a plate filled with eggs and sausages, and walked over to greet his friends.

"Hiccup!" cried Ruffnut, overjoyed to see him. "There's an empty spot right here, sweetie." She edged away from the unoccupied seat and gave him a flirtatious look, shoving her brother out of her way as she did so.

The Haddock boy gave her a pained look and then turned to Snotlout. "You wouldn't mind trading seats with me, would you?" he asked desperately.

As could be predicted, however, Snotlout just laughed. "Are you kidding?" he asked with his mouth full of eggs. "You can deal with that crazy girl on your own."

"Thanks so much," Hiccup muttered bitterly before sighing and sitting down heavily between him and Ruff.

The Thorston girl was on him immediately. "Bacon?" she offered sweetly, pushing her plate nearer to him.

"Uh, no thanks. I'm good," Hiccup replied, shooting Astrid a desperate glance across the table.

She didn't disappoint him. "You should have heard him laughing when you failed your dare so badly yesterday," she said with a smug grin. Ruff just blushed and looked at her plate.

Hiccup smiled thankfully at Astrid, and she returned the smile.

"I honestly thought that she'd be able to pull it off," Snaketail mused.

"But as it turns out, she wasn't," Batwings pointed out.

"Yeah!" agreed Tuffnut. "You underestimated how much my sister can't stand to be around" He trailed off when he finally realized what he was saying.

"Speaking of which, doesn't Ruff get to dare someone next?" Arachne piped up. "Pass the salt please, Fishlegs," she added.

Ruffnut immediately cheered up and propped her chin up on her fist, eyes sliding once more in Hiccup's direction. "I'm going to pick you to dare next, Hiccup," she told him, fluttering her eyelashes.

A groan escaped Hiccup's mouth, and he banged his head gently on the table exasperatedly. "Alright, what do I have to do?" he moaned, secretly fearing the answer.

Ruff made a big show of thinking about it. "Hmm, good question," she replied with mock thoughtfulness. "I have so many ideas. Let's see nowâ€¦ I could dare you to ditch Astrid and hang out with me for a day or twoâ€¦"

Hiccup wasn't sure what scared him more â€" Ruff's seductive expression or Astrid's ferocious one.

"â€¦But I'd most likely get beaten up for that," the Thorston girl admitted. "So, I'm going to have to pick the next best idea and dare you to, I don't know, go an entire day without riding Toothless?"

A huge spluttering sound occurred as Hiccup choked on his sausage. He started hacking and coughing violently, trying to dislodge the morsel from his throat. Finally, Snotlout whacked him on the back so hard that the chunk of meat went flying across the table and hit Snaketail in the forehead. Also, Hiccup's right shoulder blade went numb.

"Do I have to?" Hiccup protested. "I promised Toothless we'd go flying right after breakfast!"

"My, my, that's too bad," Ruff sang playfully. "You could always go with the first optionâ€¦ I'd personally prefer that myselfâ€¦"

"Alright, fine!" he announced, throwing up his hands in defeat. "I'll stay off of Toothless' back for a day." In the back of his mind, he wondered how he'd explain this to the Night Fury himself.

The rest of their breakfast passed as it usually did. The twins fought, Fishlegs chatted with Snaketail and Arachne, Snotlout flirted with Astrid, and Batwings and Heather mischievously stole fish from each other's plates. Hiccup just slumped in his seat and unenthusiastically ate his meal. The fact that he wouldn't be able to fly with Toothless today took the taste out of his mouth.

"Cheer up, Hiccup," Fishlegs said on his way out the door, patting his friend on the back. "You can still work with Gobber in the forge. And there's always this afternoon's lesson to look forward to."

The skinnier boy just grunted and shoved another egg into his mouth.

"Guess I won't be able to go flying with you today," Astrid muttered as she got up from the table as well. Then her eyes widened and she rapidly amended, "Oh, sorry! I didn't mean to remind you of thatâ€¦"

"It's fine," Hiccup replied nonchalantly. "I'll see you later, Astrid."

His girlfriend nodded and waved goodbye as she left the Great Hall,

followed by her little sister. Everyone else filed out soon after that, leaving Hiccup alone to finish his breakfast. Snotlout patted him on the back as he walked past, and Batwings ruffled his hair, in order to help cheer him up.

Five minutes after his friends had all gone, Hiccup finally cleaned off his plate and stood up. "Well, I might as well get this over withâ€¦" he muttered, walking toward the door without any sort of motivation to help push him forward.

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*Hiccup's House\*\***

As Hiccup had expected, Toothless was eagerly waiting for him when he arrived at his house. The Night Fury spotted him immediately and galloped over with the saddle in his mouth, gurgling enthusiastically and dropping the riding gear at his feet. He looked up at his human friend with his expectant green eyes.

"Yeah, about that," Hiccup said reluctantly. "Thanks to, um, circumstances beyond my control, I'm afraid that, uh, we won't be able to go flying at all today."

Toothless' ears perked up and he looked questioningly at Hiccup, clearly asking if he was joking.

"Sorry, bud," Hiccup sighed. "I know you were looking forward to it, butâ€¦ yeah, I'm afraid that it's kind of not going to happen now. Again, sorry."

The Night Fury's ears drooped sadly and a low warble emanated from his throat as he looked down at the ground.

Hiccup felt guilty about dropping this on his friend so suddenly. "Tell you what," he said, the enthusiasm in his voice making Toothless look up again. "I won't be very busy tomorrow, so we can do some extra flying then to make up for today. Sound good?"

Toothless gurgled happily and licked Hiccup across the face. The scrawny boy laughed and patted the dragon's nose. "Thanks for understanding, bud," he said gratefully, before walking off toward Gobber's forge.

"Ruff's going to regret thisâ€¦" he muttered under his breath.

However, Toothless' keen dragon ears heard this remark. The Night Fury thought about it for a while, and wondered if Ruff had anything to do with Hiccup's sudden reluctance to go flying.

Toothless nodded his head once as he arrived at that conclusion. With a snort, the black dragon loped off to find the Thorston siblings.

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*I was originally going to have Hiccup fail this one, but I decided against it. Two fails in a row would seem a little bit repetitive.\*\***

**\*\*Anyway, review and maybe send a dare suggestion, and I'll see you for the next chapter!\*\***

**\*\*Toothless: "\*\*\*\*\_Have you humans seen Ruff and Tuff anywhere?\_\*\*\*\*"\*\*\***

**\*\*Next chapter: Hiccup dares Fishlegs\*\***

#### 14. Silence is a Virtue

**\*\*Technically, silence is not a virtue. A virtue is actually something that contradicts one of the Seven Deadly Sinsâ€|\*\***

**\*\*â€|Anyway, rambling aside, this dare was suggested by Ferdoos. The funny thing is, I actually had this idea set aside for Batwings later on!\*\***

-.-.-.-.-..

The day passed rather quickly. Before Hiccup knew it, it was morning, and that meant Ruffnut's dare was no longer in effect. In a strange twist, it was now Hiccup who was waking up Toothless in order to get in some early-morning flying. Not that Toothless had any objections like Hiccup often had â€" the Night Fury became ecstatic when he realized they could go flying again.

It was an hour later when the Vikings of Berk looked up to see the initially startling, but welcome, dark shape of the Night Fury coming in for a landing at the Great Hall. It was Thursday again, and that meant that dragons were once again allowed inside during meal times.

Hiccup and Toothless walked in to find the interior of the Great Hall mostly empty. Of course, his friends and their own dragons were still there at their usual table. There were also a few adults wandering about, feeding their dragons and discussing things like the latest flying tricks and the best ways to clean out a dragon's ears. Hiccup grabbed one of the last few plates sitting around â€" it was baked potatoes and a bowl of chowder â€" and took a few fish for Toothless as well before heading over to greet his friends.

"There you are," Astrid said with a smile, moving over and clearing a space for him to sit down. "I should have known you'd be late, since you didn't get to fly Toothless at all yesterday."

Hiccup smiled back and slipped in next to her. "Yeah, Toothless was really excited to get back in the air at last. Thanks to Ruff," he added, shooting her a scathing look.

The Thorston girl held up her hands in defense. "Hey, you could have refused the dare," she suggested. "That's always an option."

"That's never an option!" Snotlout disagreed emphatically, pounding his fists on the table.

Hiccup glanced over at Fishlegs, who was bending over his dragon scale collection and muttering to himself. "What are you up to this

time, Fishlegs?" he asked wryly.

"I think he's going over his collection to see which ones have hairline fractures and which ones he can keep," Snaketail said sarcastically.

Fishlegs glanced up and saw everyone watching him. "What?" he protested. "Trader Johann's coming again soon. I'm trying to figure out which scale I'd want to trade him if he has anything I want. Like this Siren scale for instance â€" I have Batwings to thank for it, by the way. It definitely has forty percent more luster to it than any of the other scales, but the Gronckle one has six extra points in durability. Then there's the Puff Nadder scale, whose consistency is considerably less like a scale and more like skin, with a plus seven in flexibilityâ€|"

"Blah blah blah," Snotlout said. "Just go with the Siren one. I'd bet there isn't anyone else out there who's managed to get one of those and escape with their lives."

It was one of those rare instances when Snotlout had a point, other than the ones on his helmet.

"Say, where is Batwings anyway? And Heather too, for that matter," wondered Astrid. Indeed, both dragons were absent.

"They probably just had a restless night and are sleeping it off. If you know what I mean," hinted Tuffnut. "Wait, \_do\_ you know what I mean? 'Cause I don't."

"Ooh!" exclaimed Fishlegs. "It would be amazing if they had eggs during the next breeding season! We could be the first people ever to document the breeding habits and nesting behavior of the Sirens!" The Ingerman boy looked beyond excited.

"That'sâ€| one way of putting it," Hiccup muttered. "I don't know what Batwings would say about it, though."

Snotlout gave a short laugh. "Yeah, how would you like it if some weirdo with a notebook watched while you and your girlfriend" â€" he shut up immediately when Astrid treated him to the usual punch-to-the-shoulder therapy.

All of a sudden, the Siren couple themselves descended down upon their table and sat down. "Now what are you guys chattering about?" Batwings asked with a small yawn. "You yak more than yaks."

Tuffnut was confused. "Wait, since when do yaks yak?" he asked.

"Maybe if you stopped yakking, you'd hear them yak," Heather said with a grin. She seemed to be enjoying the admittedly amusing conversation.

Ruff jerked a thumb at her brother. "So for the yaks to yak, this yak has to stop yakking?" she said with a wide smirk.

"Who are you calling a yak, yak-breath?" demanded Tuff, shoving her to the ground. She grabbed his arm and dragged him onto the floor with her, and their usual breakfast-time brawl got started.

"Please, enough of the yak talk," Hiccup sighed. "I've had enough of yaks ever since the Berk Stampede."

"How about yak milk?" suggested Snaketail.

"Yaknog?" asked Astrid.

"I'm trying to eat," muttered Snotlout.

"What about yak pie?" wondered Arachne.

"Alright, enough!" said Batwings, ending the conversation.

There was a moment of silence. "So they're calling it the Berk Stampede now?" Snaketail asked suddenly.

"Yeah, that's what my dad's been calling it," Hiccup confirmed. "He said that in hindsight, it was a nice bit of excitement to break up the monotony of village life."

Batwings snorted. "What's next? Willingly releasing the animals into the streets once a year during Thor's Day Thursday?"

"I can see it now," Astrid said sarcastically, holding her hands before her as if conjuring an image in their heads. "'The Running of the Yaks'."

"At least the dragons could get in some good hunting practice," Heather pointed out. Behind her, Hookfang, Stormfly, Rilebolt, and Barf and Belch all nodded in agreement.

"We really shouldn't encourage the idea," Fishlegs gulped. "I mean, sixty percent of the village was completely destroyed during that stampede, and we had to help repair about fifty percent of that. Additionally, Goathi was working about thirty percent overtime. According to my calculations, we all gained a plus four in muscle by being forced to do all that work."

Astrid punched Hiccup on the shoulder. "Hey, I think I just found your new working-out regime," she said teasingly. "On a side note, who are you going to dare next?"

Hiccup's eyes lit up in realization. "Oh, that's right," he said. "Hmm, I think I'll dare you, Fishlegs."

The much larger boy gulped and tried to shrink back in his seat. "Please don't make it anything I'll regret doing," he whimpered.

"Actually, now that I think about it, I don't really have any ideas," Hiccup admitted. "Can someone give me a suggestion?"

It was Heather who spoke up first. "Thinking back to our earlier conversation," she said softly, "how about if Fishlegs doesn't say a word for the rest of the day?"

Fishlegs himself straightened up a little more. "That doesn't sound too bad. Can we go with that?" he asked, directing his question at Hiccup.



"Sure," the Haddock boy answered. "But remember, not one peep out of you for an entire day. Got it?"

Fishlegs nodded.

"Will he be able to pull it off?" Snotlout wondered, asking no-one in particular.

Fishlegs shrugged.

"I guess that answers that," Batwings said with a snicker.

Fishlegs gave another nod.

After that, everyone finished breakfast and started to leave one by one. Fishlegs began to get up from the table after the exhausted Ruff and Tuff had left, but froze in his seat when Stoick almost bumped into him.

"Morning, kids!" he said jovially. "Sorry about that, Fishlegs. Are you alright?"

Fishlegs glanced around nervously before nodding.

Stoick regarded him quizzically. "Are you sure?" he asked, somewhat concerned.

The Ingerman boy nodded again and quickly speed-walked out of the Great Hall before he could crack under the pressure.

"What's with him?" the Chief asked to no-one in particular.

"No idea," Astrid shrugged.

"Fishlegs is a rather odd sort," Batwings remarked.

"He just clammed up all of a sudden," said Snaketail with mock worry.

Stoick firmed his jaw and looked off in the direction Fishlegs had gone, before shrugging his massive shoulders and lumbering off. \_What could those kids be up to this time?\_ he asked himself for what seemed like the hundredth time this week.

"Is it just me, or is your dad catching on?" Arachne asked Hiccup.

The Haddock boy shuddered. "By the gods, I hope not."

-.---.--.

**\*\*Yak-talk for the win.\*\***

**\*\*So, Fishlegs is forced to keep his endlessly-flapping mouth shut for once. Meanwhile, it seems that Stoick's suspicions that something is amiss are growing. Let's see how long we can keep this dare war going, hmm?\***

**\*\*Fishlegs:** "There's approximately a thirty-two percent chance that things will go horribly wrong."\*\*

**\*\*Tuffnut:** "Wait, wasn't he supposed to stop talking?"\*\*

**\*\*Fishlegs:** "Eep!"\*\*

**\*\*Review and send a suggestion for the next chapter's dare!\*\***

**\*\*Next chapter: Fishlegs dares Snotlout\*\***

## 15. A Day out of Character

**\*\*Sorry for my long absence. Anyway, this dare was suggested by quite a few of my readers, and I'm all for pleasing the general public.\*\***

**\*\*Especially when I get some enjoyment out of it as well, heh heh heh.\*\***

-.-.-.-.-

The sun was just rising that morning when Batwings flew out from his window and into the chilly dawn sky. Beating his wings against the slight headwind that had kicked up, the Siren took in a great lungful of the invigorating air. He always did love mornings, and this was always the best part.

He was heading away from the small, ordinary house he shared with Heather and toward the eastern cliffs to watch the sunrise. Batwings did this several times a week, not bothering to do so on days that were cloudy. Often, Heather would join him â€" but this morning, she was still fast asleep, and the male Siren didn't want to disturb her.

A roar pealed across the sky, and Batwings glanced up in response to a sudden rush of air above him. A black shape streaked away from him and up toward higher altitudes. He smiled at the sight of Hiccup and Toothless already starting their own morning flight.

Finally, he reached the eastern cliffs. Settling himself on a flat rock, Batwings folded his wings and crossed his legs slightly, fiddling with the new contraption that Hiccup had given him. "Glasses", they were called, and Hiccup had made them when Batwings had noted that his eyesight wasn't as good as it used to be. The odd device was made up of curving metal frames that held lenses made of glass (hence the name) that curled over the bridge of his nose and around his ears. It improved his sight greatly, but they still felt a little heavy when they rested on his face. Obviously, he couldn't wear them in his pure dragon form, either.

Now, thanks to these "glasses", Batwings could watch the slowly rising sun with exceptional clarity. He smiled, as he always did, as the great, glowing orb rose from below the horizon and into the sky, filling the world with its light.

Sometimes, Batwings wondered if the world was flat as everyone said. If it was, then where did the sun go during the night? How come it rose in the east and set in the west? Those were mysteries that would

probably never be unraveled, even hundreds of years from now.

A soft fluttering sound made Batwings turn around. He couldn't help but widen his smile as Heather silently sat down beside him to watch the sunrise as well. Still without speaking, the female Siren slid her arms around his waist and her wing around his shoulders. Batwings did the same, holding her close.

They sat in silence like this for a while, regarding the sun as it gradually ascended higher in the sky. "It's the little things, isn't it, that make life worth living," Heather finally murmured.

"I agree," Batwings replied. "Every moment with you is something special to me."

Heather laughed. "I was talking about the sunrise," she told him. "But I have to admit that you're right. I treasure each minute we spend together," she added, her voice a soft croon.

The two humanoid dragons kissed briefly, then continued to watch the sun rise, and the sky slowly change colors from soft lavender to ever-brightening blue. Batwings indeed loved these peaceful times spent with Heather, valued them more than anything. Of what use was having a mate if one couldn't have a few romantic moments alone with her every day?

Finally, after several more of these romantic moments, the two Sirens stood up and stretched. "Are you going to head to the Great Hall for breakfast?" Heather asked quietly.

"I'm going to visit Nightshade first," Batwings told her. "I'll meet you there if you want."

"No, I'll come along with you," the Siren girl replied loyally. "We're all a family, aren't we? You, me, and Nightshade."

Batwings looked skyward for one last glance at the sun and the sky it illuminated so majestically. "Have you ever thought aboutâ€¦ expanding the family?" he murmured.

"Pardon?" asked Heather, tilting her head.

The male Siren blushed. "Nothing," he hastily amended. "Let's go see Nightshade."

-.-.-.-.-

**\*\*Great Hall\*\***

"Oh, you have no idea how much relief it is to be able to verbally express myself again!" Fishlegs exclaimed, running his mouth nonstop once again.

"Remind me why we limited his period of silence to only a day," Snaketail muttered, butchering her sausage. "I'm still amazed he managed to remain silent for a full \_hour\_ yesterday."

Indeed, this next morning in the Great Hall signaled the end of Fishleg's ban on talking. To everyone's surprise, he had made it through the entirety of yesterday without making a peep. Everyone had

thought that Fishlegs keeping quiet would be as impossible as Ruff and Tuff not fighting. But shockingly, the largest and most timid member of the gang beat all of their expectations.

"That was amazing, Fishlegs," Hiccup congratulated his friend. "Seriously, for you that's a major accomplishment. Maybe this experience will help you next time we imitate Alvin, tie you up, and grill you for information about our dragons."

Fishlegs gulped. "Please no," he whimpered. "That was scary."

"That was so much fun," Ruffnut snickered sadistically. "It's always fun watching Ingerman squirm."

Suddenly, the doors to the Great Hall burst open, and in swooped Batwings and Heather. "What did we miss?" asked Batwings, snatching a plate of fish and fluttering down beside Astrid.

"We were just congratulating Fishlegs on his victory," chuckled the blonde girl, moving over to give the Siren a bit more room.

"Oh yes, the whole 'keeping silent' thing," Heather said in realization. "And you're saying he managed to do it?"

"Yep," Fishlegs said proudly, feeling kind of good about himself. "I never thought I could do it either."

Snotlout just laughed mockingly and swiped Fishlegs' mug of yak milk. "Alright, so maybe it's a big deal for Chicken Legs," he sneered, "but I'd be able to do much better. I could go a week without talking!"

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "I'd like to see you go a week without boasting, Lout," he muttered.

"Make that a day without boasting," suggested Astrid, giving Snotlout a smug look.

"Puh-lease!" scoffed the Jorgenson boy. "I could do that in my sleep!"

Batwings chuckled. "So far, we're not seeing any evidence that might suggest such a thing," he said, biting the head off of a mackerel.

"Hey, why not make that his dare?" asked Arachne enthusiastically. "Dare him to go a day without bragging or being proud."

All of their heads immediately swung toward Fishlegs. "Wh-what?" he asked nervously. "Why's everyone looking at me?"

"It's your turn to dare someone, isn't it?" Tuffnut said bluntly. "Wait. It is, right? Or was it Snotlout's? Now I'm confused."

"Snotlout's turn will come later, butt-elf," scolded Ruffnut, dumping her soup onto his head.

"Well, Fishlegs?" said Hiccup. "Are you going to dare Snotlout?"

The Ingerman boy shrugged. "I guess so. Snotlout, I officially dare you to act humble for twenty-four hours. And to be fair, I'm going to give you three chances as well."

"I accept!" replied Snotlout, slamming his fist down on the table confidently. "This is gonna be a piece of cake! Heck, I'm not even going to need those three chances!"

Astrid smirked. "Oh yes you will. In fact, you just used one."

Snotlout immediately clammed up and turned back to his meal, smartly deciding to stay silent.

"He's not going to make it," Astrid said decisively.

"Maybe he will," Arachne pointed out. "I mean, Fishlegs went a day without talking, right?"

There was a combination of nods and shrugs. Nods that said Astrid's little sister did have a point, and shrugs that said Snotlout didn't have a hope of getting through this dare regardless.

"Snotlout's pretty much doomed in this one," noted Ruff, subtly nudging Astrid in the side. "He's not going to be able to remain humble for long."

"You're right," Astrid sighed with mock regret. "And it's too bad. After all, Snotlout can do anything else, can't he?"

The arrogant boy in question pounded his fist on the table again. "Hey, I can too! I'll dazzle you all with my humbleness! I doubt even Hiccup can be as humble as me!"

"I don't," Batwings sneered. "Because you just used up another chance."

Snotlout turned bright red and glared at Astrid. "No fair!" he protested, causing some of the Viking adults to look over at their table. "You tricked me into saying that! That's playing dirty!"

"Since when have you ever played fair, Lout?" asked Astrid rhetorically, crossing her arms.

Snotlout faltered. "Well, there was the time â€" wait. No, Iâ€" I see what you're doing. Don't try to confuse me!"

Thankfully, the others managed to stop Astrid's smart reply before it started. The group uneasily descended into their breakfasts, with the occasional expectant or perhaps nervous glance toward Snotlout being the only reason they looked up from their plates.

Finally, someone had to break the silence. "So, are we all going flying today?" Hiccup asked the group. "I'm planning on giving a lesson dedicated entirely to flying practice."

"Entirely?" inquired Snaketail, looking up in interest.

"Yeah," Hiccup replied, "I basically want to see how you all fly."

We're going to be going for a ride all over the island. It'll be a good opportunity to practice those flight maneuvers that each of you are having trouble with, I might add."

"I'm in!" Arachne piped up.

"I've got nothing better to do," said Tuff dully.

"Guess that means I'm going," Ruff added with a roll of her eyes.

Batwings looked at Heather questioningly. She giggled softly and assured him, "Yes, I want to go."

Hiccup looked around at the gang in a satisfied way. "Alright, guess everyone's coming along," he noted. "It's always fun flying with all my friends."

"Oh, for sure," agreed Arachne, nodding enthusiastically. "It isn't the same if everyone isn't there."

"Poor Snotlout," smirked Astrid. "He won't be able to show off his 'superior' flying maneuvers today."

The Jorgenson boy turned the most interesting shade of puce, and he shook with frustration.

"Unless he loses the dare," Fishlegs pointed out.

"That'll be nothing new," Snaketail said mockingly.

That remark did it. Snotlout stood up from the table, glared at her, and yelled, "I am Snotlout Jorgenson! I NEVER lose to ANYTHING!"

It took his dull brain a full minute to realize the irony of that statement.

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**\*\*Another loss. That makes Ruffnut and Snotlout the only two to fail a dare, I believe.\*\***

**\*\*I'm thinking of introducing some minor plotlines to this story â€" maybe an attack by the Outcasts, another peace treaty with the Berserkers, Batwings and Heather "expanding the family", etc.\*\***

**\*\*Plus, Season 2 of Riders of Berk has been out for a while (Defenders of Berk, huzzah!) so that's definitely something to celebrate. I might have the Screaming Death and his Whispering Death lackeys appear as well.\*\***

**\*\*Speaking of which, are there any plotlines YOU want to happen, readers? Suggest a few good ones along with your dare suggestions, and I'll see you for the next chapter!\*\***

**\*\*Next chapter: Snotlout dares Batwings\*\***

**\*\*This dare was suggested by Tony the Tiger. It was grrrrrrr-eat!  
\*shot\*\***

-.-.-.-.-..

Snotlout was throwing rocks into the ocean in frustration on a cliff overlooking the sea when Batwings found him. The Siren had been on an idle flight across Berk when he had spotted the Jorgenson boy, whom he hadn't seen all afternoon.

"Thought I'd find you here," Batwings said, fluttering down to land beside Snotlout.

Said boy stopped tossing rocks and looked at him. "Why?" he asked suspiciously.

"Well, you're not anywhere else on the island, are you?" Batwings replied, shrugging.

"Good point," muttered Snotlout, returning to his stone throwing.

Batwings was silent for a little while, content with watching his friend vent his frustration on the rocks he threw into the sea. Eventually, Snotlout stopped and glared at Batwings. "Alright, why are you here? Why aren't you off flying around with the other dragons?" he demanded, crossing his arms.

The dragon just smiled wryly and looked up at the sky. Seabirds were wheeling around in the air, screeching amongst themselves. He seemed to listen for a while, and Snotlout began to think that he wasn't getting an answer. With a grunt, he turned away and picked up another rock.

Batwings finally replied, "Because you're better company than those birds up there. All they seem to want to talk about is who to poop on."

That got a laugh out of Snotlout. He aimed his next rock at one of the gulls, which missed and sent the entire flock gliding away, shrieking insults at them. Batwings chuckled and muttered, "Such fowl language!"

Snotlout groped around for another pebble to throw, but didn't find any. He sat down on the edge of the cliff instead, dangling his legs over the edge. Batwings joined him, leaning back on his hands and staring out at the horizon. In the distance, he could faintly make out the outline of a sailing ship.

"Isn't that Trader Johann's boat?" the Siren asked, pointing out at the water.

Snotlout sat up straight and squinted, then grunted and settled back down. "Maybe, I dunno," he said nonchalantly. "I can't see that far. But he's supposed to arrive tomorrow morning."

"I hope that that's a good thing this year," Batwings murmured. "I don't want him sailing right into the midst of our dare war."

At these words, Snotlout suddenly perked up and turned his body so that he was directly facing Batwings. "That reminds me. I've got a dare for you, dragon boy."

The Siren idly slid his gaze toward the Jorgenson, barely even turning his head. "Yeah? What is it?" he asked.

With a smug, self-satisfied grin on his face, Snotlout declared, "I dare you to steal a pair of Gobber's skivvies out from right under his nose."

Now Batwings turned his head fully toward his friend. "That actually sounds interesting," he mused, stroking his chin thoughtfully. "Alright then. It can't be as bad as eating that eel."

"Don't get too cocky," Snotlout sneered. "Just because you didn't get sick then doesn't mean you'll succeed in this dare."

"Says the one who just failed his this morning," Batwings retorted dryly.

Snotlout puffed out his chest and stared at the Siren haughtily. "Yeah well, I'm not going to get used to it. I'm much better at succeeding than you are."

Batwings chuckled. "But I'm much better at accepting the facts when I lose."

"Yeah?" the Jorgenson boy challenged. "I'm better at physical activities!"

"I'm better at intellectual ones," retorted Batwings, giving him an amused smile.

And so the playful bickering continued:

Snotlout bragged, "I'm stronger!"

Batwings answered, "I'm smarter."

Snotlout boasted, "I can lift five sheep at once!"

Batwings replied evenly, "I can fly and breathe fire."

Finally, it ended when Snotlout struck his most devastating blow yet. "I have a proud family lineage of noble warriors! All you have is a lineage of slimy, slithering sea snakes."

Even as a confident smirk spread across Snotlout's face, a wider and eviler one made its way across Batwings'. "I have what you humans call a 'girlfriend'," he said smugly.

Snotlout's smirk twisted into a scowl, and he stormed off in a foul mood. Batwings just smiled to himself.

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*Gobber's House\*\***

Later that evening, a particularly large Viking stepped outside of



his house and headed out to his yard. A song began to thread through the sun-brightened air over Berk:

"\_I've got me axe, and I've got me mace,\_"

\_And I love me wife with the ugly face.\_

\_I'm a Viking through and through!\_"

That was the song that Gobber cheerfully recited as he, with a full bucket of water in one hand and a scrub-brush replacing the other, prepared to start doing his laundry. It was one of the things that he really enjoyed, especially on a sunny afternoon such as this. His clothes were also one of the few things he enjoyed cleaning â€" unfortunately, he didn't include himself on that list, and took baths only when forced to.

"Oh, what a lovely day ta wash me undies," he said happily, and began singing again. He dipped a disgusting pair of woolly underpants into the soapy water and swirled it around thoroughly, then placed it on his clothesline to dry.

As the burly blacksmith alternated between singing and whistling while he started on a pair of socks, a pair of predatory eyes watched him from a neighboring rooftop. They glowed ominously in the shadows cast by the chimney as their owner focused on his prey. \_He'll never see me coming,\_" the hunter thought.

He flexed his talons, making sure they were ready for the strike. He exercised his wings, flaring them briefly before folding them again. An excited buzz ran through his bones, sending his senses into overdrive. There was nothing quite like a hunt.

Gobber hung up the socks and turned back to his bucket of soap and water. The big Viking didn't suspect a thing. He was totally absorbed in his mundane chores. The time to strike was now!

The hunter leapt, soaring forward on silent wings. A sinister smirk stretched his lips apart as he angled his wings and dove. He was nearing his prey. The hunter threw out and extended his talons. Any second nowâ€¦!

\_Gotcha!\_"

He felt the sharp points of his talons punch through the soft, warm material. There was no scream. There was only the soft ripping sound of fur and skin shredding before his might. The hunter ripped his prey from its bonds and took off again, his every wingbeat almost inaudible.

Batwings glanced down at the underpants he gripped in his claws. \_This was too easy,\_" he thought, and chuckled to himself as he carried the stolen undies to Snotlout's house.

Meanwhile, Gobber finished washing his furry jacket and turned back to the clothesline, ready to hang it up to dry. But he froze, completely dumbstruck at the sight which greeted his eyes â€" instead of his favorite pair of skivvies, there were only two lonely clothespins gripping the wire.

Gobber's eyes narrowed in anger. Oh, he knew what was behind this! this act of war! And when he found it, it would wish it had never stolen his skivvies and tempted the wrath of Gobber.

"Ah, me old enemy," he muttered grimly, detaching his scrub-brush and replacing it with a menacing-looking mace. He finished his statement in a harsh whisper "â€"

"â€|Trolls."

-.---.--.

**\*\*Gobber's Forge\*\***

Hiccup quickly glanced up from the sword he was making and stuck his head out the window. He could have sworn he saw Batwings flying overhead in a generally westerly direction. And was that Gobber's favorite pair of underpants clutched in his talons?

\_I'm seeing things,\_ Hiccup thought to himself, shaking his head.  
\_The heat from the forge is stressing me out.\_

Just then, Gobber limped by, looking like he was in a hurry. Hiccup could certainly guess why. His mentor had a fierce scowl on his face, and his interchangeable arm had a mace on the end of it. "Trolls!" he was shouting. "Yeh won't get far, yeh pilferin' scoundrels! Gimme back me skivvies!"

Hiccup sighed in exasperation and walked out from the forge. "Uh, hey Gobber?" he called out, prompting the burly blacksmith to glance over in his direction in bewilderment.

"Oh, Hiccup!" he said, limping over. "Trolls stole me favorite pair of undies! Have yeh seen any around?"

"Yes, I heard," Hiccup replied flatly, "and no, I haven't. But I could have sworn I just saw Batwings fly by with your underpants a few seconds ago!â€|"

Gobber glanced up at the sky, shading his eyes with his mace as he observed the fleeing Siren. Suddenly, he laughed. "Oh, good for yeh, Batwings!" he chortled. "Yeh found the trolls and got me undies back! I'd better go follow 'im so I can get me skivvies back on the clothesline ta dry. Later, Hiccup!"

The Viking limped off, whistling merrily. Hiccup only facepalmed and shook his head, walking back into the smithy. He was pretty sure that Snotlout had dared Batwings to steal Gobber's underpants, and that was why the dragon was heading west. Snotlout's house was on that end of town.

Hiccup didn't have time for such nonsense right now. He picked up the sword he had been making and set back to work.

-.---.--.

**\*\*Some playful bickering between Snotty and Batty, which the latter wins easily. Then, a quick and skillful theft of Gobber's laundry. Today has been a particularly amusing day on Berk.\*\***

**\*\*So, any more dare suggestions? My first minor plotline is coming up, in which Trader Johann arrives in town and sells his various wares. You readers will have to come up with something pretty unique in order to have your dare featured in the next chapter!\*\***

**\*\*Review, suggest a dare, and see you soon!\*\***

**\*\*Next chapter: Batwings dares Tuffnut\*\***

## 17. Color Me Surprised

**\*\*This dare was suggested by EmmerzK. The suggestion was great, but it came close to some of the others I got.\*\***

-.--.-.-.

The next morning saw all of the students of the Berk Dragon Academy assembled together in the arena. A few of them, such as Batwings, Arachne, and Fishlegs, were already alert and observing the way the peculiar winds this morning pushed the clouds across the sky in strange formations. But a few more, such as Snotlout and Snaketail, were beyond bad-tempered for having to wake up so early.

"Couldn't this have waited, Useless?!" exploded Snotlout, unable to contain his irritation any longer.

"Actually, it couldn't," Hiccup replied dryly, unfazed. "I wanted to squeeze in a quick lesson about early morning flying before Trader Johann arrives in a few hours."

Batwings involuntarily shuddered at the name of the archipelago-wide-famous trader. "I just hope he doesn't have any more of those awful Blue Oleander flowers on board," he murmured. "I don't want any more near-death experiences, thank you."

Upon hearing these words, everyone grew quiet at the terrible memory of their dragons slowly succumbing to the toxic pollen spread by the Blue Oleanders that Mildew had planted. Heather was the only one present who had no knowledge of that unfortunate time, and now her eyes widened in shock.

"Don't worry about it, you two," soothed Hiccup, taking note of the fearful look in the girl Siren's jade eyes. "Johann knows what happened and has promised to never carry Blue Oleanders on his ship again. And anyway, he knows that Sparrowfoot would get violently ill as well if there were Oleanders on board."

Sparrowfoot was the name of Johann's Puff Nadder, a feisty, venomous dragon that Hiccup had first extracted the antidote to the Blue Oleanders' pollen from.

Heather relaxed, but didn't stray far from Batwings. She was obviously shaken at the realization that those flowers had once affected her dear mate.

"Come on, guys, lighten up," chirped Arachne, breaking the tension that had formed after the horrible plant's name had been mentioned. "The odds of Johann carrying more deadly flowers are about as good as the Flightmare coming back in another ten years."

"Do not go there," warned Astrid, shooting a baleful glare at her sister.

Hiccup coughed nervously. "Any-way," he said, changing the subject, "I really think we should start the lesson now, so that we have ample time to prepare for Trader Johann's arrival. Alright?"

Everyone nodded, some enthusiastically and some reluctantly.

"Okay then," Hiccup concluded, walking over to Toothless' side. "Shall we begin the lesson and get to flying?"

There was a collection of cheers and groans at this statement.

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*Docks\*\***

"Whatever it is you're looking for, I can assure you that you can find it here!" called Trader Johann, inviting the villagers of Berk aboard his ship upon calling out his catchphrase. The Vikings filed one at a time on board the boat, examining all of the exotic items that Johann had brought with him from his travels around the archipelago and beyond.

"Ah, Berk," sighed Trader Johann, breathing in the crisp morning air. "My favorite out of all the islands I travel to."

Sparrowfoot, the Puff Nadder, croaked his agreement from his perch up in the crow's nest.

Trader Johann went over to Fishlegs first, who was eagerly examining a book of poetry from Greece.

"Will you take a fine set of Night Fury scales for the book?" the Ingerman boy asked enthusiastically.

"Fair enough, fair enough," laughed Johann. "Consider it done, my boy."

The trader saw Hiccup and suddenly remembered something. "Oh, Mr. Hiccup!" he cried, walking over to him.

"Oh hey, Trader Johann," Hiccup said. "I was just examining these paints of yours. Pretty interesting stuff."

"Paints? What are paints?" asked Tuffnut, slouching over and eyeing the series of little jars lined up on a shelf.

Trader Johann laughed. "I'm glad you asked that, Mr. Tuffnut! You see, I got these beauties from Rome a few months ago. They use it to add color to their various works of art and many other things. I don't know how it's made, but I do know that the end result is a little like ink for writing, only in many different colors."

He uncorked the lid on the jar of paint and held it up to Tuff. Inside was a thick red liquid, too bright to be blood.

"There's an entire bucket of pink paint as well, if you like it," offered Trader Johann, pointing to the large container sitting on the deck.

"That's pretty neat-o," admitted Tuff. "But I'm looking for something else." He walked off to where Snotlout was examining the weapons stash.

"So, what did you want me for, Trader Johann?" asked Hiccup, raising an eyebrow.

In response, Trader Johann dug out from his pockets a small vial of black ink. "As promised last time we met," he chuckled with a wink. "I found that giant squid again and got you some more ink, free of charge."

Hiccup took the vial, touched that Johann had remembered. "Gee, thanks," he said.

As Hiccup chatted with Johann, Batwings observed them from his perch up amongst the rigging. Those paints were certainly fascinating, and he thought that maybe, they could have more uses than just drawing and adding color.

The Siren swooped down upon Tuffnut so suddenly that the Thorston boy jumped. "Whoa, that was good," Tuff said with a grin when he had recovered. "Could you teach me how to do that?"

"Sure," Batwings said dryly. "Maybe when you sprout wings, that is. In any case, wings or not, I have a dare for you."

Tuff blinked. "Right now? As in, now right now? While Trader Johann's here?"

"Well, why not?" shrugged Batwings. "I just got the inspiration."

The male twin was curious despite himself. "Alright, shoot. What's the dare?"

Batwings gave a sly glance to Hiccup and Johann before turning back to Tuff. "Your dare," he said quietly, "is to get a load of those paints and cover Hiccup's house with the stuff."

Tuffnut grinned again, this time with a hint of malice in the expression. "Oh, I can totally do that," he said, then faltered. "There's just one problem. I don't really have anything to trade."

The sentence was barely out of his mouth before Batwings produced three glimmering Siren scales and held them out to Tuff. "All yours," he whispered. "Just make sure you get enough paint to cover a significant portion of Hiccup's house. Say, a wall or two."

Taking the Siren scales and giving them a brief glance, Tuff's grin grew broader. "Done," he replied, shaking Batwings' hand. With a nod, the dragon took off and was out of sight in seconds.

"I have totally got to learn how to do that," Tuffnut muttered to himself, just as Hiccup said farewell to Johann.

\_Here goes nothing then,\_ thought the Thorston boy, then started forward.

"Excuse me!" he called out to Trader Johann. "I changed my mind about the paints," he added, and held out the irresistibly glittering scales.

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*Hiccup's House\*\***

Tuff managed to sneak away from the docks while everyone was still at Trader Johann's ship. He climbed all the way up to the village and headed for the Chief's house. In his hand was the big bucket of pink paint that he had bought from Johann.

\_This'll be so good,\_ he thought with a smirk as he approached the house. Stopping on the porch, he cast his gaze over the front wall, wondering where to start. \_I guess the door is as good a place to start as any.\_

With that decided, he dipped his brush into the paint and set to work. When he swept the brush over the door, it left a huge streak of brightly colored pink across the wood.

\_Oh yes,\_ he thought again, his smirk stretching to its limit.  
\_This'll be so good.\_

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*Yep, paint! I personally hate the stuff â€" it's far too messy, so I prefer pencils. However, I guess it has its uses, such as being used to deface property in this case. Let's just hope Tuffnut doesn't get caught!\*\***

**\*\*Trader Johann will still be here in the next chapter, so make sure to give me a few more unique dare suggestions! Until then, see you soon!\*\***

**\*\*Next chapter: Tuffnut dares Heather\*\***

## 18. Kicking the Bucket

**\*\*This chapter is based on a combination of dares â€" specifically, from Megadracosaurus and EmmerzK. The latter was far better, but I didn't think it would be fair to feature the same person's dare a second time. Thus, I chose two dares.\*\***

-.--.-.-.

Tuffnut was idly lounging on the roof of his house, staring off into the distance. He was bored, and tired of waiting for the inevitable to happen. \_How much longer will it take them?\_ he thought in frustration, chucking his umpteenth rock at nothing in particular.

His thoughts were interrupted by the sound he had been waiting an hour to hear â€" Stoick's shout of outrage and fury. Hastily, Tuff

scrambled down from the roof of the house and ducked into the narrow space between it and its neighboring dwelling. He peeked out and grinned at the sight that met his eyes.

A flabbergasted and red-faced Stoick the Vast was standing in front of his house, staring up at it. There was really nothing all that different about it " except for the fact that it had been painted a bright and garish shade of pink. Hiccup and Toothless were there too, each wearing similar shocked expressions as they regarded what had become of their home.

"Thank you, Batwings," the Thorston boy chuckled, "and Johann, too."

Suddenly, he was aware of another presence. Ruffnut slipped in next to him, and her eyes bugged. "What the Hel did you \_do\_?" she asked incredulously.

"Painted Hiccup's house pink," he replied proudly. "I coulda thought the idea up myself, but Batwings and Trader Johann helped."

Ruff gave him a quick, calculating look. "I heard something from Snotlout earlier today that he dared Batwings to steal Gobber's laundry," she told him. "Was this his dare for you, then?"

"Yep! It was so easy," said Tuff. "I didn't even stop to think of the consequences."

His sister suddenly smirked evilly. "You'd better think fast, then," she told him smugly, taking a few steps into the shadows of the alleyway.

Tuffnut was confused. "Why, what d'you mean" "

Suddenly, something slammed into his back, throwing him forward with a yell into the sunlight. Before he could even sit up and look back at the alley, Ruff was gone.

"\_Tuffnut Thorston!\_"

The shout made him freeze and cautiously turn around. Right in front of him were Stoick, Hiccup, and Toothless, and none of them looked very happy.

The male twin cursed his sister and swore that he'd get Ruff back sooner or later. But for now, he really needed to escape the wrath of the Haddock family. It was time to break out his super-awesome, secret escape strategy.

"Look! A distraction!" shouted Tuff, pointing at the air behind the trio. When they instinctively looked in that direction, startled, he ran for it.

\_They always fall for that,\_ he snickered to himself.

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*Farmlands\*\***

OK, so Hiccup and his dad hadn't remained fooled for very long. In fact, Tuffnut had been running for about five seconds before Toothless pounced on him. He had thought the jig was up for sure, and that he'd have to explain the dare war to the Chief, and their entire circle of friends would be banished to Outcast Island.

But before Tuff could confess anything, Hiccup had spoken up. The Thorston boy didn't know it, but Hiccup had seen the look in his eyes and immediately knew that someone had dared him to paint his house pink. Although the scrawny boy wasn't a huge fan of their dare war, and he definitely wasn't happy at what Tuffnut had done, he certainly didn't want to get every one of his friends in trouble or disappoint them by having the war abolished.

So, Hiccup spoke up before Tuffnut could, saying to Stoick that it was probably just Ruffnut who had put him up to this. Luckily, that exact excuse had been used " and been entirely true " so many times over the years that Stoick was willing to believe it.

Thus, it was only Tuff who had been sentenced to spending the rest of the day shoveling out the yak stables by hand. And if anyone had asked just then, he could reply in the affirmative that the work was just as unpleasant as it looked.

Grumbling to himself, Tuff heaved another stinking load of yak dung over his shoulder. As it landed on the six-foot tall pile with a loud \*splat\*, he dug his shovel into the ground and wiped his brow tiredly. He had been at this for three hours straight, and it was already after noon.

Tuff's stomach growled loudly, and he growled right back. "Shut up," he told it, but it didn't listen.

A sudden fluttering sound stopped him just as he was about to pick up the shovel again. He turned to see Heather melting out of the shadows behind him, folding her wings behind her. "Batwings told me what happened," she explained, before he could ask. "I wish I could have been there to see it."

Tuffnut scowled. "I am not in the mood right now," he warned her. "I'm super-cranky. And super-angry. I'm super-crank&|gry," he finished uncertainly, trying to think of a better way to blend the two words together.

"Well, I'd better be off then," Heather replied with a slightly mocking smile. "Unless you wanted to give someone a dare, in which case you can tell me and I'll relay the message to them."

Grunting, Tuff pulled the shovel out of the ground and propped it up on his shoulder, prepared to get to work. "I don't know," he said nonchalantly. "You. There, I said it. I can't think of anyone else off the top of my head."

The dragon girl's smile widened. "Alright then, what is it you want me to do?"

Tuff looked around the stable for anything that could possibly serve as some kind of inspiration. The only thing in the musty, foul-smelling room " besides him and Heather " was Bucket's pitchfork. It was usually the dim-witted Viking's job to feed the



yaks every day.

Suddenly, he got the inspiration he needed. Tuffnut turned back to Heather and told her, "You have to go steal Bucket's bucket. And then steal something from Johann's ship and put it in the bucket," he added as an afterthought, in an attempt to make the dare more challenging.

"That's an interesting one, to say the least," Heather replied after a moment. "But I can do it. Should I bring both items here as proof?"

"Yeah, might as well. And you have to do it within the hour or you fail the dare," Tuff grunted, turning his back on her and returning to his work. He still had several piles of dung to shovel out, which wasn't a fact that helped his mood.

Heather only smirked to herself and silently flew out of the stable, leaving no traces of her presence behind.

-.-.-.-.-

**\*\*One Hour Later\*\***

The female Siren returned exactly an hour after she had been issued her dare by Tuffnut. In her claws, she carried an old, worn-out bucket and an ordinary-looking grey sack. It had taken up almost all of her allotted time to find a bucket that was made of the same metal, and looked as beaten-up, as Bucket's bucket, but she had eventually found one outside of Gobber's forge.

Heather wasn't an idiot. She knew perfectly well that Bucket was off at Trader Johann's ship with all the other Vikings, so there would be plenty of witnesses if she swooped down and snatched the bucket off of his head right then and there. She took almost predatory enjoyment out of watching her friends "formerly her enemies" being humiliated, and didn't want to risk the abolishment of the dare war. Not to mention that folks such as Snotlout would never let her live it down.

Therefore, it wasn't exactly Bucket's bucket that now rested in Heather's talons, but one that almost perfectly resembled it. \_If Tuffnut realizes that I've tricked him, I'll eat my wings,\_ she silently promised, with a slightly malicious chuckle.

And then there was the item that she had gotten from Trader Johann "it had been easy to trade, since she had recently found a couple of very pretty pearls in the large river that wound through Berk's woods, the same one that the Flightmare followed every ten years in pursuit of its glowing algae. She could always find more pearls, but the chance to humiliate Tuffnut only came once in a while.

She flapped her wings a couple of times in preparation for landing, then lit down in front of the stable in which Tuffnut was still working. Heather could hear him grunting and muttering to himself as he shoveled even more yak dung. She set down the bucket and briefly debated going inside, but eventually decided against it.

\_He'll find out soon enough, \_Heather thought with a smile. \_In the meantime, why don't I go see what Batwings is doing?\_

She morphed into her pure dragon form, and with a strong flap of her wings, the female Siren was off and flying.

Meanwhile, Tuffnut finally threw the last bit of dung over his shoulder and into the massive pile behind him with one last heave. Panting exhaustedly, he threw the shovel onto the ground in front of him and left. He had no desire to stay inside that smelly barn for a second more than he had to.

When the Thorston boy stepped outside of the barn, the first thing he noticed was the lonely bucket sitting in the grass as if waiting for him. "Whoa, where did this come from?" he wondered, totally bewildered.

Then it hit him â€" he had dared Heather to bring him back Bucket's bucket and an item from Trader Johann's boat. Tuff peered closer at the bucket, examining it closely in case she had gotten him an ordinary bucket. She had tricked him â€" and everyone else â€" quite a few times in the past, so this might be a trick as well, he reasoned.

But after carefully examining the bucket, Tuffnut deduced that this was indeed Bucket's bucket sitting in front of him. \_Guess she knew that I'd be smart enough to tell if it wasn't,\_ he thought, chuckling to himself.

Then he took note of the object sitting inside of the bucket. Curious as to what it was, Tuff reached inside and roughly pulled it out. It felt heavier than he expected, and seemed to be made of cloth.

He held the object at arm's length and examined it. It was, to put it bluntly, a grey sack. But something about it seemed familiar to Tuff. He was sure that he had seen it on Trader Johann's ship beforeâ€|

â€| and then it hit him. This was the mysterious, spiky creature that he had almost stabbed himself on last year.

Tuffnut was about to throw the unknown creature to the ground with a startled shout, when all of a sudden, its spikes sprang out through the fabric with a sound like a sword being pulled from its sheath. He felt the sharp pain of multiple spines piercing his hands and arms, and hollered â€"

"YEEEEOUCH! Oh, I am hurt! I am \_very\_ much hurt!"

-.--.-.-.

\*\*Yes, Heather hasn't lost any of her deviousness since she first met the gang as a spy for Alvin and the Outcasts. And of course Tuff isn't the sharpest knife in the drawer, so tricking him would be doubly easy in her case.\*\*

\*\*Trader Johann obviously has other places to go in his travels around the archipelago, so he will be gone come the next chapter.\*\*

\*\*Send me a suggestion or two for a good dare, and the next minor

plotline will probably come soon. See you then, readers!\*\*

**\*\*Next chapter: Heather dares Snaketail\*\***

## 19. Out of the Frying Pan

**\*\*This dare comes from none other than yours truly. I didn't get any good dares for Snaketail in the previous chapter, so I made one up on the spot. \*glares\*\*\***

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*Great Hall\*\***

Dinner came around eventually, as it always did when the sun began to descend below the horizon. Thankfully, it was around this time that Tuffnut finally stumbled out of Goathi's hut, sick to his stomach from all of the magical potions and herbs that she had made him ingest.

Naturally, the minute he walked into the Great Hall, all of his friends had demanded to know what had happened to him. With varying reasons, of course â€" Hiccup, for instance, had asked out of genuine worry, and Ruffnut, for example, only wanted to know how much he had suffered and if she could eventually replicate that pain on him. Figures.

Tuffnut's arms were covered in bandages from the elbow down, leaving only his fingers free of their wrappings. The wounds underneath the bandages throbbed painfully whenever they were touched or somehow agitated. His stomach was roiling and his face was slightly green. His condition wasn't exactly inconspicuous, so he just shrugged and confessed to what had happened.

By the time he was through with his story, Heather was grinning like a madwoman. So was Ruff, but her grin was full of more malice than amusement. Fishlegs' eyes were wide and Snaketail looked bored. Arachne was fascinated with his tale â€" as younger folk tended to be â€" and Hiccup was looking at the Thorston boy with empathy.

"I can't believe she did that to you," Ruff smirked. "Out of all the things on Johann's shipâ€¦ oh, that is just too good." She reached across the table to give Heather a high-five.

"I do seem to recall hearing Bucket complaining that someone had stolen his bucket earlier," Fishlegs mused.

However, no-one knew what Heather knew â€" except Batwings, naturally. Bucket's usual headgear had fallen off while the Viking was bringing in the latest haul of fish, and the currents had carried it down to Secluded Beach, which was obviously the last place Mulch and Bucket thought to look. Gobber was convinced that trolls were behind the 'theft', and spent a lot of time in front of his house with a huge mace in his hand, glaring at passersby as if they were hiding a troll in their trousers. The bucket that Heather had given Tuffnut was just a regular one that looked uncannily like the weather-predicting one that Bucket always wore.

"So anyway," Snotlout said, changing the subject. "What about the

Thorfest games? They're going to be starting soon, you know!"

"Oh, \_great\_," Hiccup muttered.

"Come on, Hiccup," Snaketail said encouragingly. "You know that the games aren't that bad. Even Fishlegs enjoys them."

"Yes, well he enjoys any competition that gives him an opportunity to rub something in Snotlout's face," Arachne observed, mouth stuffed full of turkey.

"I object to that," Fishlegs said, offended. "I enjoy competition because it gives us an opportunity to learn from each other and increase the bond we already have with each other. Beating Snotlout's just a bonus."

Said boy snorted and snapped a chicken's wishbone in half.

"Puh-\_lease\_," he objected. "No one's ever beaten me at the Thorfest games!"

"And here we go!" muttered Batwings bitterly.

Astrid shut Snotlout up before the bragging could start. "You only won last year because Hiccup let you," she spat. "And don't you dare deny it, because you know it's true."

Her outburst had everyone else looking at her warily. "Goodness, Astrid," Hiccup finally said. "There's no need to blow up at him like that."

"Must be her time of the month," Snotlout chuckled nastily, only to be kicked across the table and onto the floor by you-know-who. "I rest my case!" he added weakly.

"Everyone's been in a bad mood recently, haven't they?" Heather said casually, passing the salt to Ruffnut.

"Astrid's only upset because she lost her axe-throwing competition earlier to her dad," Ruff replied.

"That's true," the older Hofferson girl admitted. "And Gobber's paranoid because of all the 'trolls' he thinks are running around at midnight."

"Wait, so there isn't any?!" Arachne asked, appalled. When the others shook their heads, she hung hers and muttered, "Thor damnit!"

"Who else has been in a bad mood recently?" wondered Snaketail.

"I have," confessed Batwings. "Just last week I got irritated and set Mildew's cabbages on fire. Took him a day to put out the flames, and then ten seconds to get on Stoick's nerves when he complained."

Heather looked at him concernedly. "What is it with you recently?" she asked, not unkindly. "And how could I make you feel any better?"

"I have a few suggestions," Snaketail hinted, nudging her arm and looking at her knowingly.

Far from being embarrassed, Heather only smirked and leaned closer to Batwings. "I could if you really wanted me to," she breathed softly.

Batwings turned bright red and fidgeted uncomfortably. "We'll see," he whispered back.

"Anywayâ€|" Hiccup said, steering the conversation away from such innuendo. "Everyone's been rather uptight recently. Should we do something about it?"

Tuff's face lit up. "We should have a giant bonfire!" he exclaimed.

"No," Astrid said flatly.

"How about a 'Running of the Yaks' like Astrid suggested?" Arachne asked eagerly.

"We're supposed to be helping everyone relax, not suffer further," noted Fishlegs.

"Guys, the Thorfest games are coming up!" said Snotlout, sliding back into his seat. "Everyone's gonna have tons of fun when that rolls around. Especially me, because I'm gonna win!"

"He actually has a point," Batwings said incredulously.

"About him winning?" asked Tuffnut, face totally blank.

"NO!" everyone except Tuff and Snotlout shouted.

A brief silence descended, during which everyone ate and listened to the low murmur that filled the Great Hall as all the adults conversed in the background. Finally, Heather spoke up.

"Well, I know how to alleviate our moodiness for the time being, at least," the female Siren said softly. "It's my turn to dare someone, isn't it?"

"Oh yeah!" said Tuff, his face brightening again. "I completely forgot about the dare war!"

"Even after you just came back from Goathi's after the consequences of the dare you gave Heather?" inquired Hiccup, raising an eyebrow.

"Wait, I did?" asked Tuffnut, bewildered.

Heather snickered. "Moving right along, I pick Snaketail to be my victim for this."

"Awesome," murmured the Grundenson, her defiant smirk widening by the second.

"You have to ride Hookfang for three minutes while he's on fire," Heather said all at once, so suddenly that everyone almost didn't catch it.

"Dude," Snotlout said in admiration. "That really sucks."

"I know," Ruff agreed. "It'll be so cool."

"That's actually a really good dare," Batwings marveled.

"You expected anything less?" Heather asked him sweetly, quickly pecking him on the cheek.

Snaketail's grin only got wider. "Oh, I'm SO gonna do that!" she exclaimed, getting up and rushing for the door.

"That was fast," remarked Astrid.

"Should the rest of us go see how this turns out?" asked Arachne, showing almost unnerving eagerness toward the concept that Snaketail could possibly get horribly mutilated and disfigured from riding a flaming dragon.

But then again, as Stoick the Vast often said, "It's an occupational hazard".

"And risk having the whole war thrown out the window if any of the grown-ups see us watching from the sidelines and not doing anything to assist her?" Batwings replied rhetorically. "\_No\_."

"Would having the dare war abolished really be such a bad thing?" quipped Hiccup, only to be met with the scolding glares of all of his friends. "Right, stupid question. Staying quiet now."

-.-.-.-.-..

**\*\*Snotlout's House\*\***

"\_You want me to do what?\_" asked Hookfang, not totally convinced that he had heard the Grundenson girl right.

Snaketail sighed, noting the Monstrous Nightmare's disbelief even though she couldn't understand his language. "Yeah, it sounds stupid, but I've gotta do it, or Snotlout will never let me live it down. So can I go for a quick ride while you're up in flames?"

Barf and Belch gave Hookfang an I-told-you-so look. "\_Weren't we just telling you that she was more insane than our riders?\_" Belch, the brother head, asked.

"\_And you actually thought she was mentally stable,\_" sighed Barf, the sister head, who gave Hookfang a pitying look.

All of them – the girl and two (technically three) dragons – were outside in Snotlout's family's yard. Hookfang had been lazily watching the sunset whilst talking to the Zippleback twins when Snaketail had ran up to them and began spouting nonsense. It kind of ruined the peaceful moment they were having.

"Come on, Hookfang, I have to bring back evidence that I roasted my butt for three minutes, or else I'll lose the dare," Snaketail almost pleaded. Vikings, no matter how desperate, didn't plead – but because Snaketail was a teenager, it was understandable in this

circumstance.

"\_Couldn't you just have me barbeque your trousers instead?\_" Hookfang asked, not wanting to leave in the middle of his conversation with Barf and Belch.

"\_No, that would make too much sense,\_" Barf told him.

"\_Ah,\_" the Nightmare conceded.

Finally, Snaketail sighed. "I'll give you a freshly-caught salmon," she said grudgingly, reaching into her boot and pulling out the fish.

Hookfang considered and decided to just go with it. He snapped the fish up in one bite, then lowered himself so the Grundenson girl could get on his back.

"Alright, Hookfang, mush!" she commanded. "Uh, I meanâ€¦ just fly when you're ready," she amended.

The Monstrous Nightmare grunted before taking off and bursting into flames. Snaketail's hoots and hollers of both pain and excitement carried across the island, where Vikings all over stepped out onto their doorsteps and saw a young woman riding a flaming dragon.

"\_Yep, she's insane,\_" Belch concluded.

"\_But somehow, Horrorcow finds a way to love her, doesn't she?\_" Barf asked.

"\_True,\_" her brother admitted.

The Hideous Zippleback stretched out more comfortably on the grass as they raised their heads and watched Hookfang circle around above the village, glowing like a comet, while Snaketail shouted all the while.

-.--.-.-.

\*\*I think we can safely say that Snaketail has this in the bag, can't we?\*\*

\*\*Anyway, you readers must come up with more dare requests for me, because it isn't really all that fun coming up with them all on my own. Even \*\*\*\*\_my\_\*\*\*\* imagination fails me sometimes.\*\*

\*\*Oh, and I'll sic Astrid on you if you don't. So there.\*\*

\*\*Farewell, my dear readers! \*big smile\*\*\*

\*\*Next chapter: Snaketail dares Snotlout\*\*

## 20. Dragon-Nipped

\*\*This dare was suggested by Transmorphic Wyvern. However, I also bring up a dare requested by quite a few of my

readers.\*\*

-.-.-.-.

**\*\*Great Hall\*\***

That Thursday morning was punctuated by the acrid scent of burning trousers. While it wasn't uncommon in a village of Vikings to smell something burning, there was still something unusual about it.

"What's that smell?" asked Tuffnut, nose crinkling in disgust. "Is that you?" he added to his sister, shoving her into her plate of eggs.

"Obviously, someone tried stealing Stormfly's breakfast again," Fishlegs noted. Behind him, the Nadder shook her head and chirped in the negative.

"That reminds me, didn't Snaketail have to ride a burning Nightmare?" Hiccup asked as he scooped some porridge into his mouth.

Hookfang rolled his eyes behind their backs. Snaketail's request never really made sense to him â€" but then again, what did make sense when he was a companion to one of these teenaged nutcases?

Just then, the Grundenson girl herself appeared at the table, helping herself to some bacon. "Yep!" she said cheerfully. "And it was so awesome!" She sat down with a smile, a wisp of smoke curling into the air behind her.

"So that's what that smell was!" Tuffnut said in realization, then pointed his fork across the Great Hall where Mildew was angrily ranting. "Mildew dropped his breakfast in the fire pit!"

"Don't you hate the smell of burnt cabbages?" agreed Ruffnut, pinching her nose.

Batwings smiled and gulped down an eel â€" a dead one this time. "So you actually succeeded in riding Hookfang without permanently damaging your rear end?" he asked Snaketail.

"I can see you didn't change your trousers," Heather added, jabbing a claw at Snaketail's smoking garments.

The girl just smirked and stuffed a strip of bacon in her mouth. They had clearly underestimated just how much of this dare war she could take. Snaketail was a competitive person, perhaps even more so than Snotlout â€" it would be interesting to see the two go head-to-head in the Thorfest games.

Speaking ofâ€|

"So, is everyone ready for the first event of the Thorfest games tomorrow?" asked Astrid eagerly, smashing her fist into her waiting palm with relish.

"Oh, more ready than you can imagine," muttered Hiccup.



"I'm gonna destroy all of you!" bragged Snotlout. "I'll win Thorfest just like I do every year!"

Fishlegs raised a polite hand. "Actually, you almost lost last year's competition," he corrected the Jorgenson boy.

"But I still won!" said Snotlout, puffing out his chest a little more so he wouldn't be tempted to deflate.

"Only because Hiccup let you," Astrid snickered.

Snotlout held his proud posture for about five seconds, trying to think of a snappy reply. When he couldn't, he sagged and muttered, "Shut up, Astrid!"

"I don't know much about previous years," Heather began in her soft voice, "but I'm certain that the outcome will be close this year. Astrid is just as good as –" if not better than –" Snotlout at these Viking contests of strength and stamina. Hiccup is great with dragons, and Snaketail's ego won't let her lose so easily."

"Not to mention that you've got us to worry about this year," Batwings smirked, wrapping an arm around Heather's shoulders. "We've decided to compete in the games as well, just to see what its like."

Hiccup raised his eyebrows. "We've got two Sirens competing this year, huh?" he mused, stroking his jaw. "This'll be an interesting Thorfest."

"Trust me, you guys, there is nothing like the thrill of competition," Arachne piped up, speaking for the first time this morning.

"They say that competition is the very essence of life itself," Ruff said wisely.

"Didn't you already say that before we started training with the Terrors?" her brother asked, bewildered. The Thorston girl slapped him.

Hiccup stirred his boiling oatmeal with his spoon in an idle manner. "I wonder if there'll be an event for the Terrors this year," he said nonchalantly.

"Ooh, I hope so!" Fishlegs hooted. "I want to show off the new tricks I taught Deathwing to do!"

A moment's silence pervaded the table. "Seriously, you named your pet Terror \_Deathwing\_?" asked Batwings blandly.

"Don't ask," Hiccup said quickly, before the Ingerman boy could launch into a heated defense of the well-thought-out context of his Terror's name.

Snaketail rapped her mug on the table, catching their attention. "I hate to interrupt this budding debate –" by the way, there's no doubt that Greatgust is \_the\_ best-trained Terror on the island –" but I've got a dare for Snotlout."

The attention of the Jorgenson was instantly captured. "Well? Let's hear it!" he demanded. "I could use a warm-up for when I dominate the Thorfest games tomorrow!"

"Actually, you can't dominate if you take my dare," sneered Snaketail. "My dare to you is to purposely lose the Thorfest games."

Instantly, the silence settled thickly on the table, so thick that they could have cut it with a knife.

"â€|No," Snotlout murmured.

"Sorry, what was that?" asked Heather.

More loudly, the normally arrogant boy rasped, "No. I'm not accepting that dare."

Heather's eyes widened. "That's what I thought you said. Are you feeling alright, Snotlout?"

Snotlout shrugged. "If I lose, my father will kill me," he explained. "And I'll go down in history as the first Jorgenson to lose the Thorfest games. I'll be a laughingstock! My children will be laughingstocks!"

"I don't think you'll have to worry about that â€" the children part, at least," said Arachne with a smirk.

"I can't believe I'm saying this," Hiccup began, "but Snotlout is actually right."

"We might be Vikings, but we're not cruel," Ruff agreed with a nod.

"Wait, we're not?" Tuff asked, bewildered.

Snaketail sighed. "Alright then. I'll pick another dare if it makes you feel any better, once I think of one that is."

Snotlout slumped in relief and went back to his sausage. For about a minute, the table was silent as everyone went back to their breakfasts and tried to come up with ideas for a good dare for Snotlout. Then Fishlegs raised his head from his plate eagerly.

"How about Snotlout stuffs dragon nip in his clothes and leaves it there all day?" he asked, and the dragons eating around them all raised their heads in interest.

"Oh, I so wanna see this," Tuff said, grinning.

"Alright, you're so on!" Snotlout declared, slamming his fist down on the table. He got up and ran out of the Great Hall, yelling "Snotlout, Snotlout, oi oi oi!"

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "And he's back," he muttered.

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*Berk Dragon Academy\*\***

Snotlout opened one of the cage doors " which once held captive dragons " and found a smorgasbord of useful items for training dragons inside. The cages held everything the dragon trainers would ever need, from spare rope to dragon antivenin to fresh fish. And it was at the back of this particular cage that the dragon nip was stored.

Making his way to the very back of the dark stone room, and pushing past the various boxes and bags that blocked his way, Snotlout found the box where all of the dragon nip was stored. Snickering, he began to take fistfuls of the sweet-smelling grass and stuff them down his shirt.

He emerged from the cluttered cage about ten minutes later, his shirt, boots, pants, and even his helmet bursting with dragon nip. Snotlout made a face at the smell, but soon ignored it and allowed his face to twist into a confident smirk instead.

"I am so gonna win this dare," he muttered to himself, chuckling. "And then I'll show them that Snotlout Jorgenson isn't someone to be humiliated!"

He walked out of the Berk Dragon Academy with a swagger in his step, making his way across the bridge and down into the village. He was completely confident in the inevitability of his victory. After all, he was \_Snotlout\_, and he was better at winning than anything!

In fact, the arrogant boy was so blinded by confidence that he didn't hear the wingbeats of the first of many eager dragons to come, attracted by the saccharine smell of concentrated dragon nip emanating from his clothes.

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*Ha, Snotlout's a dragon magnet! A 'dragnet'!\*\***

**\*\*Also, Snotlout turned down Snaketail's dare, which means he's one step closer to losing.\*\***

**\*\*By the way, Greatgust is the name of Snaketail's Terror, whom she trained with in my altered version of the episode "Worst in Show". Should the Terrors be involved in a plotline prior to this, readers?\*\***

**\*\*That aside, the Thorfest games start tomorrow! That means its time for some more creative dares! What should they do to mess up the events?\*\***

**\*\*Leave a suggestion with your review, and I'll catch you later!\*\***

**\*\*Next chapter: Snotlout dares Fishlegs\*\***

## 21. Blind Faith

**\*\*This dare was suggested by EmmerzK. Excellent suggestion, my friend!\*\***

-.--.-.-.

The following morning marked the start of the annual Thorfest games. The metallic net over the Berk Dragon Academy was lifted, scoreboards were prepared, and the entire academy was basically transformed into a huge arena in which the Vikings could show off their skills in the various events that made up the games.

Unfortunately, the gang would have to wait their turn to perform â€" the teens and children would be competing in a few days' time, when all the adult Vikings were finished. Right now, though, they had more time to prepare and train for the games, as well as the entertainment of watching their parents perform almost superhuman feats of strength and daring.

As the gang took their seats in the benches ringing the edge of the arena, they began eagerly talking to themselves about the events they most wanted to see, and the events that they were most looking forward to participating in.

"I can't wait to see the ship-tugging contest," said Tuffnut with a grin as he plopped down next to his sister. "Remember last year, when Gobber tugged two canoes at once across the entire island?"

"Or when Spitelout threw his canoe fifty feet away from shore when he lost?" added Ruffnut enthusiastically, bumping helmets with her brother.

"My mom will win the axe-throwing competition," Astrid said confidently, folding her arms across her chest. "She does it every year. A few years ago she beat everyone else by a landslide!"

"Half a landslide," corrected Hiccup. "My dad came pretty darn close in that contest." He winced when Astrid half-irritably, half-playfully slugged him in the arm.

Snotlout puffed up proudly, making his innumerable Thorfest medals that hung from his neck a little more noticeable. "I just want the grown-ups to finish their events so I can show everyone how awesome I am! Again!" he bragged, the medals jingling.

"You just had to bring those, didn't you?" Batwings muttered.

"And I can still smell dragon nip on you," Heather pointed out, her voice taking on a slightly dreamy tone as the irresistible scent found its way into her nose.

The arrogant Jorgenson just scowled at her and gave his armpit a quick sniff. He could have sworn that the smell had faded away last night, when he had taken an hour-long bath in potato juice. That was the cure for smelling like dragon nip, wasn't it?

He was still sore from yesterday, when he had made repeated, desperate attempts to shake the entire island-full of dragons that had converged on him, but he was still proud of himself. At dinner last night, everyone had agreed that Snotlout had officially survived that particular dare. So he was still in the dare war â€" for now.

Meanwhile, Snaketail was looking around at how the entire arena was set up for the special event. "This is very different from what my tribe did every year for Thorfest," she noted with interest.

"Why? What did they do?" Arachne asked curiously, swinging her feet back and forth eagerly. She was impatient from waiting for the games to start.

"Well, they start off with a goat sacrifice," Snaketail replied seriously. "They always pick the biggest goat in the herd so that its entrails will be long enough to" â€

"Ooooookay, that's quite enough of that," Hiccup interrupted, steering the conversation away from such a gruesome topic.

Fishlegs was watching the adults filing into the arena with great interest. "Oh, there's my dad!" he said, jumping up and down in his seat and pointing to a short, stocky Viking with a beard not unlike Mulch's.

"And there's Bucket," chuckled Ruff. "You think he'll win the yak race again this year?"

Three of the gang â€ Hiccup, Fishlegs, and Arachne â€ winced at the memory of Bucket's yak tripping over a rock at the crest of a hill, ending up tumbling end over end down the slope and beating the other Vikings across the finish line.

"Knowing Bucket, I don't doubt it," muttered Hiccup.

Just as he finished that sentence, Stoick stepped up to the stage that Spitelout and Gobber had erected in front of the warehouse cages. After a short speech, the Chief pronounced the start of the Thorfest games. His announcement was met with a huge swell of cheers from the teenagers, competing adults, and the ones who had decided not to join in the games that year.

The events rapidly got underway. First was the three-legged race, which obviously involved teams of two Vikings with their legs tied together. However, as with all seemingly simple competitions, there was a twist â€ those Vikings with only one leg to spare had to group themselves into teams of three and have their peg-legs tied together. Of course, this was a pretty challenging event, but one that Gobber's team of three won with ease.

Then, there was the yak race, in which the Vikings had to ride yaks across an obstacle course that spanned the entire island, and then make it back to the arena. This time, Bucket didn't win (Ruffnut scowled as she handed over a garden trowel and a basket of chicken eggs to a smirking Astrid), but he came close in second, right behind Sven and his yak, Ironhorn.

It was during the cock-fighting contest when Snotlout leaned forward to tap Fishlegs on the shoulder. As the adults below battled each other ferociously by swinging the frantically-clucking birds at each other, Fishlegs turned around and whispered, "What is it, Snotlout?"

"I got the inspiration I needed for my next dare," Snotlout muttered back with a sly grin. "It was during the yak race."

Fishlegs sighed. "And let me guess," the Ingerman said grudgingly. "You're going to pick me to go through with said dare."

"Correct," the other boy chuckled. "Anyway, I want you to ride into the arena on Meatlug while wearing a blindfold."

A horrified look flashed across Fishlegs' face. "I can't do that!" he blurted, making Batwings glance over in his direction briefly, before once more turning to watch the feathers fly.

In a quieter voice, Fishlegs repeated, "I can't do that! Stoick would have my head on a platter!"

Snotlout snorted, unconvinced. "Come on, Chicken-legs. You'll have Meatlug to save your fat rear, won't you?"

"My mom says I'm just husky," Fishlegs protested. Then he thought for a second and muttered, "Butâ€¦ I guess you have a point. I'll do it."

"Good man," the Jorgenson boy said with a chuckle. "I'll make a Viking out of you yet. Now get out, and bring back that Gronckle of yours!"

Fishlegs sighed again, more heavily this time. He stood up, momentarily blocking the view of the teens sitting behind him, and walked away until he was out of sight.

"What was that about?" asked Astrid over the din of panicked squawking coming from the arena.

"Please tell me it doesn't have something to do with the dare warâ€¦" Heather muttered to herself.

But Snotlout heard, and smirked at her. "You got it, sister. I just gave Fishlegs an awesome dare. I'll be surprised if he doesn't chicken out!"

Speaking of chickens, the battle below was reaching its climax. Stoick gave a mighty swing with his bird â€" he swung so hard that he accidentally let go of the chicken. It attached itself to Spitelout's face and started clawing and pecking at him in a panic, causing the burly Viking to yell in pain and instinctively hurl his own chicken away.

The barnyard bird's squawk rang out loud and clear across the arena, catching the notice of several of the gang. "Look out, Snotlout!" cried Arachne, ducking her head.

Snotlout, who hadn't noticed the chicken heading right toward him, looked at the girl skeptically. "Look out for what?! There's nothing here but â€" CHICKEN!"

His scream, twice as loud as the flying chicken's squawking, echoed far and wide just as the bird landed on him. Panicked something fierce, the bird pecked at the Jorgenson boy in a frenzy of confusion and fear. Snotlout got up from his seat and ran away, cursing loudly and exclaiming every time the chicken's beak jabbed him.

"Fishlegs might have been the one to get dared," noted Batwings with a chuckle. "But it looks like Snotlout's suffering instead."

"That \_has \_to be the funniest thing I've ever seen," chuckled Ruffnut.

"Chicken one, Snotlout zero," added Tuffnut, giving his twin a high-five.

-.--.-.-.

The gang didn't see Fishlegs until the adults started one of their last events later that day. It was the egg toss â€" which basically involved them splitting into teams of two and tossing an egg between them back and forth. The twist was that regular chicken eggs hadn't been supplied, but explosive Terrible Terror eggs. The pair that made it the longest without having their egg blow up in one of their faces was the winning pair.

So far, half of the Viking teams had had their eggs explode, covering them with red-hot yolk that dripped from their clothes, sizzling every time a drop hit the ground. Stoick, Gobber, Mulch, Spitelout, and (surprisingly) Mildew were still in the competition, amongst several other adults. Up above the arena, the teens and other spectators were cheering for their friends and family.

"You can win it, Dad!" called Hiccup, after Stoick successfully caught the heavy egg that Gobber tossed at him.

"GO MULCH â€" damnit, Mildew caught itâ€|" spat Snaketail.

And who should come prancing in on a Gronckle just then but Fishlegs himself?

The Ingerman boy all of a sudden rode through the gateway leading into the arena and started parading around and around, riding on a galloping Meatlug. The dragon looked like she was enjoying herself greatly, with her eyes bright and her tongue lolling out of her mouth.

Fishlegs, however, looked like he wanted to drop dead from humiliation. Even though he couldn't see through the huge blindfold he wore around his head, he knew that the entire island was staring at him and Meatlug. His face was beet red with embarrassment, which everyone could clearly see even though he did his best to hide it.

The gang, initially shocked speechless, started howling with laughter. Even Hiccup managed a weak chuckle as Meatlug ran circles around the arena, having the time of her life.

The competing adults were so surprised by the sudden appearance of Fishlegs and his Gronckle that they weren't prepared to catch the eggs their comrades threw at them. Thus, all the Terrible Terror eggs shattered one by one, exploding violently and throwing up huge bursts of glowing yolk and black smoke into the air.

"I take it back!" wheezed Ruff as she tried her best to stop cackling, with the screams of the adults and the explosions caused by the eggs ringing out into the air. "This is the funniest thing I've

ever seen!"

"Where's Snotlout?" gasped Astrid, laughing so hard that she had to cling to Hiccup for support. "He issued the dare, and now he's missing all the action!"

Down in the arena, Fishlegs decided that he had completed the dare, and couldn't take any more of this. He whimpered to himself, "My family's going to kill me," and rode back through the arena gateway on Meatlug, galloping off into the distance.

It was only then that Snotlout arrived, his face covered in bandages. "What did I miss?" he asked his guffawing friends.

The only reply he got was louder and crazier laughter.

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**\*\*Sh\*t and crackers. I won't be able to incorporate Snoggletog into this story in time for Christmas. But I can assure you, Snoggletog will come!\*\***

**\*\*A reader previously asked for a scoreboard of sorts, detailing how close everyone is to winning/losing the dare war. Here are the total strikes that each person has:\*\***

**\*\*Snotlout: 1\*\***

**\*\*Ruffnut: 2\*\***

**\*\*Everyone else: 3\*\***

**\*\*I cannot foresee this dare war being over any time soon.\*\***

**\*\*Send a review and dare suggestion my way, and see you all for the next chapter!\*\***

**\*\*Next time: Fishlegs dares Batwings\*\***

## 22. Egg-cellent Challenge

**\*\*Sorry, Batwings. I didn't want to do this to you this early, butâ€¦ this dare comes from Celaena.\*\***

-.-.-.-.-..

**\*\*Great Hall\*\***

The adult events of the Thorfest games had come to a dramatic close earlier that afternoon, when Stoick the Vast utterly destroyed the competition during the log-throwing competition. As the last fifteen-foot log hit its target with a mighty crash, the crowd cheered and applauded as Stoick was awarded his thirteenth medal. It was lucky he wasn't superstitious.

Everyone exited the arena after that, all chattering and laughing eagerly over the events they had seen previously. Luckily, no one brought up Fishlegs' sudden interruption, but there were a few



whispers here and there concerning the mental health of the Ingerman boy, and suggestions to tie him to a mast and ship him off.

But the teens rapidly squandered such rumors before they spread, saying that Snotlout had blackmailed poor Fishlegs into doing it. Although the arrogant boy reacted with outrage, even he had to admit that it was kind of true. The blackmail in this case was losing a chance to pass or fail a future dare, thus bringing the offender that much closer to losing the entire war and becoming a laughingstock amongst his or her friends.

However, that evening there was much enthusiastic chatter and loud laughter in the Great Hall as Vikings socialized over their particularly hearty meals. Thorfest only came around once a year, and there was always some celebratory feast going on when it did.

"Seriously, Fishlegs," Snaketail soothed as she patted the miserable boy on the back. "It's over now, right? No one's really talking about your little 'incident', so you have nothing to worry about. Just put it behind you, and maybe sometime later you can have a good laugh over it."

"That was the most humiliating thing I've ever had to go through in my life!" wailed Fishlegs, flopping down onto the table with despair. "Even eating the raw fish and not talking for a day was better than this!"

Hiccup mused a bit over that. "I guess that's true," he admitted. "It's not like the other two things were thatâ€¦ public."

Tuffnut couldn't help snickering as the image entered his head again. "Dude, that was so awesome," he chuckled, spearing a piece of trout with his fork. "We need more totally embarrassing dares like that!"

"How about having someone walk off a cliff while the entire village watches, and that person has to continually sing the Berk national anthem while he does so!" exclaimed Arachne excitedly.

"Yeahâ€¦ no," replied Astrid, shaking her head and lightly swatting her younger sister. "It's creative, but we need something less life-threatening."

"Why don't we just lay off on the dares for a" â€" began Hiccup, then noticed the glares his friends were spearing him with. "Never mind, bad idea," he sighed, picking at his cod.

Batwings noticed Fishlegs still wasn't cheering up, and pushed his plate of fried potatoes over to the boy. "Just don't think about it," the Siren suggested, as Fishlegs instinctively shoveled some of the cooked vegetables into his mouth. "Why not think about, say, Snotlout getting mauled by a frightened chicken?"

The boy in question turned beet red and protested, "Hey, that wasn't funny! That stupid bird almost clawed my eyes out!" His blushing face looked even more hilarious with the various bandages and foul-smelling ointments covering it. He had needed to see Goathi after he had gotten hit with the rogue fowl.

Fishlegs took one look at Snotlout and smiled vaguely. "That image is kind of amusing," he admitted, giving a sort of weak chuckle. Snotlout glared back at him and angrily chopped the head off of his fish.

Ruffnut broke the silence by decisively clapping her hands together. "So, Fishy, who're you going to dare next? You've been humiliated, so now it's your turn to humiliate someone."

Now everyone was looking at the Ingerman boy with interest. They all waited to see what he would say.

Instead of the timid reluctance they were all used to seeing, and expected to see once again from him, Fishlegs' faint smile widened and he sat up a little straighter. "Well, I have had an idea for a dare for Batwings," he answered, pointing his fork at the male Siren.

The dragon rolled his eyes and, grinning with anticipation, let out an exasperated sigh. "Alright, what do you want me to do this time? I've already had to steal someone's underpants and eat a live eel. What could be worse?"

By now, Fishlegs was positively smirking, the expression looking completely out of character on his plump, usually kind face. "You shouldn't have asked that," he said with an almost satisfied tone.

"I don't like the look of that smile," Snaketail whispered to Astrid.

"Your dare," continued Fishlegs smugly, "is to have an egg with Heather during the next breeding season."

The moment those words were out there, the table grew quiet. Batwings paled until he was whiter than a ghost, and Heather, who had been picking apart her haddock, suddenly looked very interested in their conversation.

"That isn't so bad," Hiccup said cheerfully, whilst trying to get that disturbing mental image out of his head. "After all, Snoggletog isn't for another few months. That gives you plenty of time to, ah, prepare."

"Oh, no it doesn't," Heather sang, sliding closer to Batwings and giving him a sly grin.

Fishlegs turned his smug smile toward his friend. "And that's because, Hiccup, they know just as well as I do that they have to conceive the egg so that it's laid and ready to hatch by the time Snoggletog rolls around. And by my calculations, that would mean they have to start tonight."

Now it was Hiccup's turn to pale. "Oh," he said simply.

"Dude," Snotlout said admiringly. "I never expected something that harsh to come out of Fishlegs' mouth."

Arachne was looking from one astonished face to the next, completely confused. "Why?" she asked. "How're they gonna make the

egg?"

"Magic," Astrid replied instantly, before anyone could explain.

Everyone's attention was now focused on the future father himself. Batwings still hadn't said anything, so shocked was he. Heather just smiled and twined her arm around his, patting his hand soothingly.

"It's alright if you don't want to," she told him. "I understand that this should be our decision to make, and not anyone else's."

Batwings finally found his voice. "Yeah, about thatâ€¦" he began cautiously. "I, well, was recently trying to work up the courage to ask you toâ€¦ expand the family." The male Siren blushed when Snotlout gave a loud, mocking whistle.

His mate, on the other hand, gave him a devilish smile. "Go onâ€¦" she purred, wrapping her arms around his waist and pulling him closer to her.

Oddly enough, Batwings seemed to grow a tiny bit more confident. "Well then, Fishlegs," he said, staring his friend directly in the eye. "I'll accept your dare. That is, if Heather wants to as wellâ€¦"

The words were barely out of his mouth when Heather held a finger to his lips, cutting him off. He gazed at her and immediately saw her expression, a strange mix of pride and hunger â€" and not the kind of hunger you'd get when looking at a tasty fish. Batwings gulped, finding her expression a little frightening (and admittedly quite attractive).

"I've been waiting a long time for you to ask me thatâ€¦" the female Siren crooned in his ear, her soft voice making Batwings shiver in delight. "Of course I want to. Now why don't we head off to bed now, so we have a bit more time to enjoy ourselvesâ€¦?" She giggled when her mate nodded and smiled back at her.

Hiccup glanced briefly at each of his friends, not knowing what to think of Heather's new and rather creepy attitude. Snotlout was now looking envious, Fishlegs was delighted, and the twins were wearing their signature sadistic grins. Arachne looked more bewildered than ever, Snaketail looked neutral, and Astrid lookedâ€¦ thoughtful.

The Haddock boy wasn't sure if that confused or terrified him.

"I guess we'll see you guys tomorrow morning," Batwings said, getting up from the table. He gave them a cheery wave, then spread his wings and flew out of the Great Hall, with Heather following close behind and giggling like a madwoman.

"Well," Astrid said after a few moments of very thick silence indeed. "I think I now know how I'm convincing you to bed eventually." She nudged Hiccup and planted a swift kiss on his cheek.

Yep. Now he was terrified.

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**\*\*Batwings' House\*\***

The Sirens had a rather modest little home on the other end of the village. It consisted of only one room, with a bed in the corner, a table in the center of the room, and several other pieces of assorted furniture. They were really the only dragons in the village that had their own living space.

It wasn't like the couple needed it, but Stoick had felt obliged to assimilate them into the village as proper members, and insisted. And in this case, being cut off from the rest of Berk by four walls and a roof had its advantages.

Batwings sat on the edge of the bed, nervously wringing his clawed hands together. It wasn't just that the suspense was getting to him, but Heather hadn't strayed a foot from him since Fishlegs had issued his dare. She was positively clinging to him, acting far more affectionate than usual. It was making the poor Siren uncomfortable.

"What's the matter?" Heather finally asked him, taking note of the worried arrangement of his facial features.

"Allâ€| this," Batwings sighed, spreading his hands in a broad gesture.

Heather cracked a smile. "You just gestured to all of us."

"Exactly," her mate replied. "I just don't feel ready toâ€| be a father."

Understanding immediately, Heather smiled sympathetically and once again held him close. "I know what you mean," she said softly. "Being a parent will be a challenge, but one that we will never face if we keep putting it off. And I'll always be there with you to help, okay?"

Now Batwings smiled. "That's part of the reason I love you," he murmured, looking into her jade-green eyes.

Her only reply was to lean forward and kiss him. Batwings replied in kind, slowly drawing her into a warm embrace. Their wings unconsciously extended, hooking their claws around the others'. It was that long, tender kiss that strengthened the both of them, making them both feel a little more confident. They knew that their love for each other would never waver, never fade.

It was only the first of many the couple would share that night.

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**\*\*Seriously, Fishlegs might have actually been doing our Siren friends a favor.\*\***

**\*\*I'm not going to go into detail with the author's note here, because we need to give them a bit of privacy â€" so review please,**

give me a few dare suggestions, and wait for the next chapter!\*\*

\*\*Now let's get out of here. I want to conserve my dignityâ€|\*\*

\*\*Next chapter: Batwings dares Hiccup\*\*

\*\*P.S. Have a wonderful holiday/Christmas/Snoggleto, everyone!\*\*

### 23. In the Spotlight

\*\*This dare comes from someone named My twisted mind. And this dare is indeed pretty twisted.\*\*

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\*\*Great Hall\*\*

That morning saw the Berk townsfolk gathered in the Great Hall for a warm breakfast. It was time for the adults to take their Thorfest medals and move on, for it was time for the younger generation to shine in the arena. Of course, not everyone was happy about this.

"You honestly think that this build will help me win the arm wrestling and sheep lugging competitions this year?" Hiccup sarcastically asked Astrid, gesturing to himself and his lack of muscle, as they climbed up the steps leading to the Great Hall. There was a light snow falling, but that was nothing new. In fact, the snow helped Hiccup feel a little bit better.

"Trust me," the Hofferson girl beside him assured. "You're much stronger than last year, I can guarantee that. I've been observing you all year and watching you improve, and I can safely say that you're going to end up with at least two medals this year."

"Oh really, is that so?" replied Hiccup with a smirk. "So do you also think this new, muscular me has a chance at beating Snotlout and shutting his mouth for good?"

Astrid punched him playfully, and Hiccup suddenly realized that it didn't hurt or make him stumble as much as it would have last year. Perhaps his girlfriend was on to something.

They pushed open the doors to the Great Hall with a bit of effort, and immediately made their way to where their breakfast sat. They each grabbed a plate of toast, bacon, and fish, and headed for their usual table. And at their usual table, their friends were engaging in their usual morning behaviors.

"Oh, hey guys," greeted Tuffnut nonchalantly as he held his sister's plate out of her reach. "Are you feeling up to competing in the games today?" His sentence was suddenly cut off when Ruff lunged at him, reaching for her food and tackling him to the ground in the process.

Hiccup just sighed and rolled his eyes before taking Tuff's seat.

"Absolutely," he muttered.

"Hey, none of that now," Astrid warned him, lightly slapping his hand. "You're going to have fun today, or I'm going to have to kill you."

"And how would you survive without me?" Hiccup shot back, gently swatting her shoulder.

Arachne chuckled at the couple's bickering and took the opportunity to steal Hiccup's piece of toast. "I'm not old enough to compete in the games," she griped. "I guess I can always hope for next year."

"Yep, that's right," Snaketail chirped, ruffling the girl's hair. "But look on the bright side. You're still welcome at the Berk Dragon Academy with us."

There was a sudden commotion as Snotlout suddenly appeared, shoving Fishlegs farther down the table so he could sit down. "I don't know about you guys," the Jorgenson boy said, "but I'm so ready for Thorfest, and I am so so ready to win it all!"

"Yes, we knowâ€|" Fishlegs muttered indignantly, shuffling a little farther away from Snotlout.

"Remember," cautioned Snaketail with a snicker, "this year, you have to worry about Astrid the athlete, Hiccup the Dragon Conqueror" â€" said boy gave her a glare â€" "and two honest-to-Odin Sirens! Are you sure you're going to win this year?"

"Hel yes!" shouted Snotlout, slamming his fists down on the table and causing their plates to jump.

There was a flutter of leathery wings overhead. "I heard you mention us," said Batwings, landing beside Arachne and taking a seat. Heather quickly sat down next to him with a smile.

Simultaneously, everyone went silent and turned their heads to look at the pair of humanoid dragons. "Um, what did I say?" asked Batwings uncertainly. He looked from one face to the other, becoming a little unnerved.

"So?" Fishlegs finally asked, unable to contain himself.

"So, what?" Heather replied with a question of her own.

Astrid leaned across the table with a sly sparkle in her eyes. "How was it?" she whispered with a stifled chuckle.

Batwings and Heather exchanged a glance, finally understanding what she was talking about. "Why do you want to know?" the female Siren retorted evenly. "You and Hiccup looking for advice?"

The Chief-to-be in question ducked his head in order to hide the ferocious blush that inflamed his face. Astrid did as well, but with the addition of a murderous glare shot from under her bangs in Heather's direction.

"If you must know, it was wonderful," Batwings murmured almost

dreamily. "Best night of my life."

"Please don't go into details," requested Snaketail, then glanced furtively at Arachne and whispered, "There's a child here."

"Anyway," interrupted Snotlout loudly, "I hate to break up the discussion about Dragon Boy's love life, but shouldn't we hurry up and get ready for the games?! The first event is gonna be in only an hour!"

Tuff and Ruff stopped wrestling on the floor and looked up at the conversation going on without them. "Jeez, Snotlout," rasped the girl twin. "No need to be so impatient."

"Yeah," agreed her brother. "It's not like you aren't gonna win anyway. Right? Because I really think one event doesn't matter in the grand scheme of things. Does that makes sense to any of you? Because it doesn't to me."

By now, everyone was staring in bewilderment at Tuff.

"Don't everyone all go talking at once," the Thorston said sarcastically.

"So then," Arachne piped up. "Shouldn't we finish breakfast and head down to the Berk Dragon Academy?"

"Just one more thing," Fishlegs said, after swallowing a large mouthful of his omelet. "Batwings, can you issue someone a dare before we leave?"

The Siren shook his head and grinned widely. "No, I can't," he told him. "I've got an idea about who to dare, and what to dare them to do, but it's going to have to wait until the games are underway."

"Oh \_joy\_," Hiccup muttered under his breath, not meaning it at all.

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*Berk Dragon Academy\*\***

It wasn't until the Thorfest games were well underway when Batwings issued his dare. The crowd's excitement was reaching fever pitch, as they cheered over and over for the competitors. So far, the arm wrestling, sheep lugging, log rolling, and axe throwing contests had all concluded decisively, with Snotlout winning three of the events so far.

The arrogant boy was actually pretty sour after Astrid had absolutely destroyed him in the axe-throwing contest.

But now, it was time for the event that everyone considered to be the best and most impressive â€" the sword-fighting contest! In this near-legendary competition, the teens would split into groups of two and battle each other out with their swords. Each group was allowed three strikes before a winner was decided, and the winner of the team that lasted the longest would ultimately get the medal.

As the gang all selected the swords they would be using, Batwings silently glided over to Hiccup as the junior Haddock tested one of the weapons. "I've got my dare," he said quietly in Hiccup's ear, causing the scrawny boy to jump.

"Good Thor, Batwings," he gasped, a hand pressed to his chest in shock. "I almost cut my hand off with this!" He waved the sword about so that the light glinted off of it.

"Sorry," the Siren apologized sincerely. "I just meant to give you the dare and move on to the competition."

"Figures," Hiccup sighed. "Very well then, what do I have to do to humiliate myself this time?"

Batwings smirked slightly. "Oh, it's very simple. You're up against Tuffnut, right?" he added questioningly.

"Yep," Hiccup replied, casting a regretful glance at the male Thorston. "I've never been able to beat him very easily though."

"You will this time," snickered Batwings. "I dare you, during your sword fight with him, to kiss him. That'll throw him off enough for you to win, I guarantee it."

Hiccup, however, wasn't listening. "Wait, what?!" he demanded.

"You heard me," Batwings chirped. "And I'm not changing it. Kiss Tuffnut, or refuse the dare and lose one of your chances to fail later."

The Haddock boy was silent for a long time. "You are pure evil," he finally stated, before stalking off with his chosen weapon.

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**\*\*Several Minutes Later\*\***

The crowd was chanting for their favored swordsman as Hiccup and Tuffnut faced off. Without his sister to distract him, Tuff was actually a very skilled fighter, one that Hiccup did his best to last against. So far, each of them had gotten two successful strikes with their swords, glancing blows that wouldn't cause any serious damage.

"Come on, Hiccup!" called Astrid, cheering him on.

"Take him down!" Ruffnut cheered, for Hiccup as well.

"Show Useless who's boss!" crowed Snotlout.

Batwings just leaned against the wall of the arena, smirking to himself. \_Any minute now\_ he kept thinking.

The sword-fighting competition was the game that Hiccup really excelled at, barring the more dragon-related contests. But the strain was evident on his face as he parried each of Tuffnut's strikes,



being kept on the defensive by his aggressive fighting style.

Finally, Tuff managed to shove Hiccup's sword aside after they clashed for the umpteenth time. Desperate, Hiccup screwed his eyes shut and, before Tuff could jump in with his sword and strike the blow that would win the competition, lunged forward and quickly kissed him on the lips.

Tuff was so stunned that he froze, allowing Hiccup to land a blow on Tuffnut's shoulder. The crowd, who hadn't seen what had just happened for the most part, cheered upon Hiccup's victory.

The other teens, however, weren't so ignorant.

"D-Did you guys just see that?" gasped Fishlegs. He was almost unable to get the words out, he was so shocked.

"Ew," said Arachne, wrinkling her nose.

"Oh, just imagine what he's feeling right now," cackled Batwings.

"That was your dare?" inquired Astrid, giving him a slightly menacing glare with raised eyebrows.

The Siren stared her in the eye without backing down. "Look on the bright side," he suggested. "At least it wasn't with another girl."

Astrid thought about that. "Point taken," she admitted, but slugged Batwings on the shoulder anyway.

"Creative," snickered Heather, patting him lightly on his injured arm. "That was quite the spectacle."

Ruff was muttering to herself. "That must have been a dare," she reasoned. "Hiccup's too smart to get me and my brother confused."

Meanwhile, as Hiccup walked away from a still-completely-stunned Tuffnut to put away his sword while keeping his blushing face ducked and hidden from the crowd, he forced himself to look at the positive (as Mildew would say).

"Well," he muttered to himself, "at least it wasn't Snotloutâ€|"

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**\*\*Heh heh heh. That was strangely satisfying.\*\***

**\*\*Honorable mention goes to EmmerzK and her dare â€" I was seriously considering that one as well. However, I decided to go for a more humiliating dare instead. Kudos to you anyway!\*\***

**\*\*How'd you like this one, readers? The Thorfest games will continue in the next chapter, so make sure to think up a few dare suggestions for me to use!\*\***

**\*\*See you soon for the next chapter!\*\***

**\*\*Next chapter: Hiccup dares Astrid (oh boy!)\***

## 24. A Spectacle to End Thorfest

**\*\*First and foremost, I think I owe all you readers an apology for my long absence – a combination of schoolwork, exams, other fanfictions, Monster Hunter Freedom Unite, and a lack of motivation was responsible for the delay.\*\***

**\*\*However, I think I feel ready to continue this story again. The dare featured in this chapter was suggested by Ferdoos. To be honest, I saw this one coming from a mile away.\*\***

-.--.-.-.

The rest of Thorfest went on despite the surprising event the spectators of the sword-fighting competition had previously witnessed. The teenage competitors lined up for the next event of the Thorfest games as if nothing had happened – although Hiccup was still reluctant to look at the crowd, and Tuffnut had a dazed look on his face.

"I can't believe you dared me to do that," the Haddock boy mumbled to Batwings.

"And neither can I," growled Astrid. She wasn't happy that Hiccup had been forced to kiss Tuffnut – in other words, someone other than her. She was even more insulted that Hiccup hadn't chosen to avoid the dare, regardless of the fact he'd be a step closer to losing.

Batwings raised his hands defensively, claws gleaming slightly in the afternoon sunlight. "In my defense, it was the first thing that came to mind," he said innocently.

"And you didn't stop to think of something a little less!" Hiccup said, pausing to think of a word (and glance nervously at his girlfriend). He finished, "A little less personal?"

"Not to mention unhealthy," Snaketail piped up, hearing their conversation.

"In more ways than one," Fishlegs added. "Firstly, I doubt Tuffnut's mouth is the most hygienic place in the world. Secondly, Astrid would have killed you were it anyone else."

"Thank you for summing that up," muttered Hiccup sarcastically.

Astrid patted his arm. "If it makes you feel any better, I probably would have only laughed if you had kissed Snotlout," she told him.

"Gee, thanks," grumbled said Jorgenson.

Heather snickered nastily. "You'd enjoy it, Snotty," she taunted. "After all, that would probably be the only kiss you'd ever get in

your life."

The gang all stepped forward and prepared to take a shot at the next challenge — chicken-tossing. It wasn't as dangerous as the adults' dragon egg-tossing event, but it was still tricky, as the chickens tended to struggle when they were caught.

As the first pair, the Thorston twins, took their chicken and began hurling it at one another, the rest of the gang continued their conversation. "So how was it?" asked Snaketail, giggling when Hiccup's face turned red.

"Are we seriously still talking about this?" hissed the chief-to-be.

"How was it?" Snaketail asked again, stifling another giggle.

Hiccup sighed and answered, "Go kiss Tuff yourself if you want to find out so badly. But if the rest of you really want to know, I still think Astrid's kisses are better."

While Snaketail flushed Monstrous Nightmare-red, Astrid gave Hiccup a grateful smile and slipped her hand onto his shoulder. "Are you just saying that because Tuffnut's the one you're comparing me to, or do you really enjoy it when I kiss you?"

"O-Of course I do!" stammered Hiccup, appalled that she even suggested that. "And why are we still talking about this?"

"Kid's got a point," grunted Snotlout. "This conversation is making me nauseous."

"Alright, here's something to think about," Fishlegs put in. "Who're you going to dare next, Hiccup?"

Like that was a better topic of conversation. Hiccup groaned loudly and facepalmed, so exasperated was he. He muttered, "Whatever happened to the Fishlegs who hated the thrill of competition as much as I do?"

Raising his hand, Batwings offered, "I think that Fishlegs started to die when Snotlout stole that Changewing egg."

"And he fell off a cliff and into shark-infested waters when we started training with the Terrors," added Heather with a grin.

Groaning even more loudly, Hiccup tried to think of a way to get out of this particular conversation but failed after about two seconds. Just why do we have to talk about this in the middle of the Thorfest games? he wondered, taking a moment to watch Ruff and Tuff continue throwing their chicken at one another with increasing hostility. Why can't we ever give this dare war a rest? Oh, that's right, because my friends are completely insane.

"Fine, fine!" he exclaimed, throwing up his hands in resignation. "I choose Astrid to be my — daree," he finished lamely, not being able to think of a better term any more than an excuse to drop the subject.

"Daree?" inquired Astrid. She raised an eyebrow skeptically as if telling him to try again.

"Technically speaking," started Fishlegs, "Hiccup's using a term he made up on the spot to describe the person he's going to dare. I imagine that the 'daree' is the one who is being dared, while the 'darer' would be the one who is issuing the dare."

"Thank you, Fishlegs," Hiccup growled, voice reeking of sarcasm. The Ingerman boy, however, didn't catch it and blushed while muttering modestly.

Her eyebrows still raised, Astrid folded her arms and looked once more at her boyfriend. "Soâ€¦ how about that dare, then?" she challenged, smirking. "Come on, I bet you can't think of a dare I wouldn't be able to complete."

Unfortunately for Hiccup, she had a very good point. Try as he might, he couldn't think of anything crazy enough for his 'daree' to be discouraged by. At one point, he considered daring her to go on a date with Snotlout, but he immediately rejected the idea â€" not only would it literally involve giving his girlfriend away (that it would only be for a few hours was irrelevant), it would also give Snotlout an additional dose of hot air and most likely get him killed in the process.

And also unfortunately for Hiccup, someone read his mind. "How about having her go out with Snotlout for a day?" suggested Batwings.

Snotlout suddenly re-immersed himself in their conversation.

Astrid narrowed her eyes menacingly and slid them in Hiccup's direction. The scrawny boy yelped and held up his hands, squeaking, "I wasn't even thinking of that!"

"How about daring her to ask her father for Gobber's hand in marriage?" asked Fishlegs with a laugh in his voice. "I'd love to see his reaction to that."

"Where the heck did you get that idea?" replied Hiccup, completely bewildered. "No way."

"Well then," said Heather in a musing tone, "why not dare her to kiss you in public at the end of the games?"

"For an entire minute!" added Snaketail.

Instead of outright denying them like with the previous suggestions, Hiccup stopped and thought about that. Although he hated to admit it, he did like that mental imageâ€¦

"You approve of that?" Astrid asked him teasingly.

Immediately, the Haddock boy put away the thoughtful expression and replaced it with one of resignation. "Fineâ€¦" he sighed. "I don't have any better ideas. Why not go with that?"

Now Astrid leaned up against him and hinted, "Don't have any better ideas, or are just looking for an excuse to kiss me?"

"Both," Hiccup replied honestly, determinedly ignoring Batwings' snickers.

Instead of outright accepting, or refusing, the dare, Astrid stopped leaning on him and turned back to watch the twins' increasingly-violent chicken-tossing contest. "We'll see," was what she nonchalantly said when Fishlegs asked her if she was going to accept.

Man, if she was trying to keep Hiccup in suspense, it was working.

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The Thorfest games ended with a bang â€" indeed, the last event had been a dragon aiming event, where Barf and Belch had sprayed the entire lineup of dummies and blew them to smithereens. While Gobber chased a cackling couple of Thorstons around the arena, Stoick stood at the center to congratulate the young competitors.

Snotlout had ended up winning again, and this time, it wasn't because someone had thrown the last match. A fly had landed on Astrid's nose during the archery contest and caused her to sneeze at the crucial moment, thus ensuring Snotlout won the event instead of her. If that hadn't happened, it would have been the Hofferson girl who had won Thorfest.

Anyway, Stoick the Vast walked down the line of teenagers standing at attention, commemorating their various feats of brilliance and athleticism during the games. He finished, of course, with his own son, saying, "And let us not forget my boy Hiccup and his incredible skills shown during the dragon aiming contest, obstacle course, and sword-fighting competition! Let's give him a round of applause!"

The crowd cheered and clapped loudly, and Hiccup cast his face downward modestly â€" only to bring it up again in shock as Astrid suddenly seized him by his shirt, pulled him roughly forward, and publicly wrapped her lips around his mouth.

Hiccup didn't hear the collective gasp of the audience, or Snotlout's groan, or Gobber's mocking whistle, or the Thorston twins' snickers as they dangled by their shirt collars from the blacksmith's hook. All he could hear as his eyes rolled back in contentment was the soft, slightly arousing smacking sounds that Astrid's lips made as she continuously kissed him.

And, of course, he didn't hear the crowd's sudden roar of celebration when he wound his arms around her and kissed her back.

All he felt was the warmth of Astrid's arms as she wrapped them around his neck and waist, her chest as it pressed firmly against his, and her lips as they moved smoothly in rhythm with his own. And all he could see were her beautiful, glittering sapphire eyes, the suggestive look in them seeming to ask, \_You like this, hmm?\_

Later, Hiccup would tell his friends that it could safely be said that that was the single best minute of his life.

-.--.-.-.

**\*\*The chapter took a while, but I have to say that the Hiccstrid at the end made the wait worth it, hmm?\*\***

**\*\*Anyway, the Thorfest games are over, and there's a TON of new material from the "Defenders of Berk" episodes to exploit (the Terrors, Scauldy, etc). Be sure to suggest a few good dares for later!\*\***

**\*\*Next chapter: Astrid dares Ruffnut\*\***

## 25. A Scauldron Serenade

**\*\*School. That's all I'm going to say.\*\***

**\*\*This chapter's dare comes from a certain HTTYDDUDE.\*\***

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**\*\*Thor's Beach\*\***

The gang was on a little fishing trip, taking the day off from the Academy to relax after the hectic events of the Thorfest games. But they had only just walked onto Thor's Beach when they noticed that there was a ratherâ€¦ big surprise waiting for them.

"Hey there, Scauldy!" cried Ruffnut happily, dropping her fishing rod and running over to the monstrosly large Scauldron. She hadn't expected to ever see the iridescent blue-green dragon again!

"Whoa, what's gotten Ruff so happy?" asked Tuffnut obliviously. "Barf's gas again?"

"You idiot, do you even see the thirty-foot long Scauldron with scales that shine like a beacon right in front of you?" Astrid retorted, whacking him over the head with her own fishing rod.

Tuff was indignant. "Yes!" he snapped, then suddenly paused. "Wait. What's a Scauldron again?"

Grunting with annoyance, Astrid whacked him again.

"Th-This is incredible!" exclaimed Hiccup. "Scauldy actually came back! And to think he actually showed up on Berk's shores!"

"I'm ninety percent sure that it was a total coincidence," Fishlegs spoke up.

"Coincidence or not, it certainly is nice to see Ruff and Scauldy reunited," said Snaketail, almost wistfully. She was still touched by how quickly the two had managed to bond â€" in the nick of time, in fact.

"I'm confused," Batwings told them. "I know that that's Tuffnut's line, but the fact still stands. I'm confused."

Said Thorston boy whipped around, positively livid. "Yeah!" he shouted. "I draw the line at people stealing my line!"

Snotlout was chuckling. "You don't even know what that is, do you?" he laughed.

"Yes I do!" cried Tuffnut, then paused a second time. "Hang on, let me thinkâ€¦| alright. I'm confused."

By now, the entire group was chuckling at the male Thorston. For once, Ruffnut wasn't among them â€" she was too busy patting Scauldy's immense green head and murmuring to him. Scauldy was staring at her with wide eyes and a smile parting his pelican-like jaws.

"I'm still confused," Batwings muttered. "Just who is Scauldy?"

Hiccup started to reply in a voice tinged with his usual sarcastic tone (usually reserved for Tuff or Snotlout), when he remembered. "Oh, that's right," he said. "You've been gone from Berk for a while. Sorry, my mistake."

"I suppose that's my fault," Heather smirked, reaching out to hold Batwings' hand.

It didn't take long to explain to the two Sirens what was going on. Scauldy, as the name suggested, was a Scauldron the gang had met on Changewing Island a while back, after Batwings had left Berk. It had been injured badly enough so that it couldn't fly or swim, and had thusly been doomed to dry out and die in the sun. But thanks in no small part to Ruff, they had been able to improvise a splint for the Scauldron and set it free.

"I still don't know how Ruff got her hair to grow back so fast," Snotlout muttered. He would never admit it, but he thought that she had been pretty good-looking with short hair.

"Wait, Ruff cut her hair?!" exclaimed Batwings. "That's something I would love to have seen."

Making themselves comfortable on the beach, the group rapidly set down their fishing gear and sat on the sand under the shade of a cliff. They cast their lines and starting talking idly amongst themselves. Ruff cast her line as well, but stuck close to Scauldy and kept up her own one-sided conversation.

"It's remarkable to see howâ€¦| nice she can be when she wants to," chirped Arachne, who was playing with a spare hook.

"Eh, I like her better when she's trying to beat me up," grunted Tuff, staring out at the water as he waited for a fish to get caught on his line.

Snotlout leaned back against a boulder and yawned. "Yeah, I do too," he agreed. "We need something to liven up this boring fishing trip. Why couldn't we have at least brought our dragons with us? Then we'd have plenty of dinner!"

Hiccup sighed. "Because," he explained wearily, "I thought that bringing the gang together for a nice, relaxing trip to Thor's Beach would be a fun thing to do after all the excitement of the past few

days."

"Remember, we've been fishing without dragons all our lives," Snaketail added.

"But the old way is so boring!" complained Arachne, then hissed a curse as she cut her finger on the hook she was toying with.

"Don't let Mom hear you say that," Astrid warned her sister.

Batwings happened to glance up at the cliff just then. In a mildly unconcerned tone, he remarked, "Especially since she and the other adults are here as well."

With that remark thrown out to everyone's ears, their heads all shot up and twisted toward the cliff in alarm. Indeed, up at the top were Stoick, Gobber, Spitelout, and an assortment of other Vikings with fishing poles as well.

"I completely forgot that this was Dad's favorite fishing spot," muttered Snotlout, scooting further into the shade of the cliff.

"Why do you suppose they're here?" Heather murmured.

"I don't know," shivered Fishlegs. "I've been scared of my parents ever since they and everyone else saw me ride Meatlug during Thorfest! I know they're just waiting for me to do something else crazy so they can ship me off to Outcast Island and" â€"

"Calm down, Chicken-legs," Batwings reprimanded, swatting the husky boy on the arm. "In fact, maybe it's a good thing your parents are all here. Now's the perfect time for Astrid to dare someone."

Suddenly, everyone was looking a lot livelier than they were two minutes ago. "And here we go," muttered Hiccup in exasperation.

"I totally forgot about that," Astrid snickered, casting her gaze around to examine each of her friends. When she got to Fishlegs, he squeaked in a worriedly loud tone â€" but none of the adults below heard it, and continued talking amongst each other.

Finally, Astrid nodded to herself and pointed a finger at her victim. "I'm going to dare Ruffnut," she proclaimed. "Please tell me you're up for it."

It took Ruff a minute to glance up from her one-sided conversation with Scauldy and try and figure out what Astrid was talking about. But then her face split into a grin, and she exclaimed, "As if this day could get any more awesome! What's my dare?"

"Yeah Astrid, what's her dare?" demanded Tuff, an equally wide grin spreading across his face.

The Hofferson girl was smirking as a pretty good idea popped into her head. "Your dare," she told the other girl, "is to sing Scauldy another lullaby loud enough for the grown-ups to hear you."



Evidently, Ruffnut didn't exactly comprehend just how embarrassing the dare could be. Either that, or she didn't quite think singing was embarrassing. It was probably the latter " after all, she did some pretty stupid things with Tuff on a day-to-day basis, and took them all in stride.

"Great idea!" she told Astrid. "I've been wanting to sing to Scauldy again. I bet he missed my voice when he was alone in the ocean."

Beside her, the Scauldron warbled lowly and nodded his great head. And up above, the adults' conversation faltered as they faintly heard it as well.

"That is a good idea," mused Heather. "I've never heard Ruff sing before."

"That's 'cause she's not very good at it," chuckled Tuff.

Under ordinary circumstances, Ruff would have shoved him to the ground for saying that, but she ignored him this time. Instead, she climbed up onto a rock that sat just off the shore in the shallow water, stood up on it, and began to sing to Scauldy. Her voice carried across the beach as she sang the first verse, which wentâ€|

"\_Hush little Viking, don't you cry,\_  
\_or the Berserkers will stab you in the eye.\_  
\_Don't let the enemy see you afraid,\_  
\_or he's gonna gut you with a rusty blade.\_"

At the sound of her raspy voice trying to carry the tune, Tuff chuckled and Snotlout winced. Batwings, however, smiled, and Fishlegs moved his fingers in sync with her voice as if conducting an orchestra.

The chatter from above stopped completely, and Stoick looked over the edge of the cliff in confusion, the better to see what was going on.

Ruff continued to sing, moving on to the second verseâ€|

"\_If that dragon hears your moans,\_  
\_he's gonna mash up all your bones.\_  
\_I promise, Scauldy, if you don't kill me,\_  
\_my friends and I will get you out to sea.\_"

Scauldy closed his eyes and rested his head on the beach contentedly. A rumbling, purring sound rose out from his throat as he made himself comfortable.

"I can't believe he actually likes that," Snotlout whispered.

"It isn't bad, actually," Batwings commented.

"Except for the \_gut you with a rusty blade\_ part," said Heather. "That's a bit too violent for a lullaby, don't you think?"

"Remember who you're talking to?" replied Hiccup sarcastically, casting his arm around at the group.

"\_Hush little Viking, don't you cry,\_  
\_or the Berserkers will stab you in the eye.\_  
\_Don't let the enemy see you afraid,\_  
\_or he's gonna gut you with a rusty blade.\_"

Ruff just kept singing, oblivious to her friends' remarks or the adults' stares of befuddlement as they gathered around the cliff to watch.

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"What in the name o' Thor's undies is she singin', Stoick?" asked Gobber amusedly. "I haven't heard a tune that bad since the time yeh" "â€"

"Quiet, Gobber," the Chief ordered lightly, and listened to the song a little bit more. It only seemed to have two verses, but Vikings weren't renowned for their creativity.

Mulch raised an eyebrow. "So lemme get this straight, Stoick," he began. "Ya brought us all here so we could listen to 'em sing that badly? It's makin' Bucket's bucket tighten up!"

"My bucket isn't tightening!" whimpered Bucket. "It's just a little concussion from this mornin'!"

Stoick shook his head at the short Viking. "We came here because I suspected we would get a chance to observe more of the kids'â€| odd behavior," he explained. "They've been acting rather, well, more crazy than usual recently."

"I'll say," Gobber grunted. "Weirdest Thorfest I've seen in all me life."

"Well then, what do ya propose we do, Stoick?" asked Spitelout.

The Chief turned back to the cliff, where the Thorston girl was serenading the sea dragon. "I don't know," he replied, "but we'll think of something soon enough."

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**\*\*So, readers, I've been thinking!\*\***

**\*\*Specifically, I've been thinking of writing a brand-new, updated version of 'Legends are Born', based entirely on the TV series. However, I don't want the new fanfiction to be too much like the older one. Therefore, I've been wondering if I should do a crossover between HTTYD and either Guardians of Ga'Hoole or Monster Hunter. Or**

both!\*\*

\*\*Give me feedback if you want, but I think this is what I'm going to eventually do.\*\*

\*\*Anyway, dare suggestions are very much appreciated, and I'll see you next time!\*\*

\*\*Next chapter: Ruffnut dares Heather\*\*

## 26. Author's Note

\*\*I just wanted to let you faithful readers know m finished with this story, at least for now. Instead, I've been working on an entirely new story, one that has the potential to go big...\*\*

\*\*A How to Train Your Dragon/Monster Hunter crossover! Not only is it a crossover, but it's also a redone version of "Legends are Born". It will focus entirely on the TV series, with only a short chapter or two covering the events of the movie. This crossover, naturally, has Monster Hunter-related content to help it reach a wider audience, but I promise that it will be enjoyable among my friends of the HTTYD fandom.\*\*

\*\*Please, I encourage you, check out my new crossover! I'll be updating it every so often with a new chapter, and I would really love it if you guys were to give me some feedback!\*\*

\*\*~Cottonmouth25\*\*

End  
file.